

11- Ple
MEDITATIONS

AND

REASONINGS.

On Various, Important, and Divine SUBJECTS.

TOGETHER WITH

An ESSAY for the Revival of PRAYER.

AND

A SERMON on PSALM cxxii. 3.

BY

HUGH INNES, V. D. M.

PSALM civ. 34. *My meditation of him shall be sweet.*

PSALM lxxvii. 12. *I will meditate also of all thy works,
and talk of thy doings.*

GLASGOW,

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TO

MARY ELPHINSTONE.

MADAM,

THESE, whom the grand Parent of nature has been pleased to advance, to the highest pitch of distinguished preferment among men, are no less deeply interested in religious concerns, than the inferior classes of mankind. — 'Tis religion alone that breathes immortal hopes into the human mind, and adds wings to the aspiring soul, for taking its rapid flight above the spheres, when death entombs the mouldering clay.

Yes, Madam, death frequently centers in the circle of the gay and facetious youth, and then the blossoms of beauty do instantly fade; 'tis not a set of features, or complexion -- the tincture of a skin, that's admirable; such beauty grows familiar to the admirer, decays in his eye, and palls upon review. Religion teaches how to improve these fading charms, with inward greatness, unaffected wisdom, and sanctity of manners: and an eminently wise Prince, whose character is recorded in the sacred pages, and has spread abroad,

D E D I C A T I O N.

thro' annual circulations---a Prince, who stands inrolled among the inspired men, has pointed at the period of life in which you now bloom, as the most opportune season for divine meditation, *Remember thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.*

'Tis impossible, Madam, I can express the regard I owe you in more genuine language, than by heartily wishing, that, as your years multiply, you may be happily directed to make proportionable advances, in the amiable paths of wisdom and piety---that you may crown an high birth, a liberal education, a sprightly genius, and an engaging temper, with that spiritual devotion which ennobles to a still more exalted pitch---which inspires the mind with what is truly great, valuable and lasting---which elevates the soul above the sordid sweets of sublunary delight, and raises its pursuit to an eminence, higher than the skies, and more durable than time itself.

Permit me to assure you, that I am with very great esteem,

M A D A M

Your much obliged

And obedient servant.

HUGH INNES.

Calgan of } June 16.
GLASGOW } 1756.

PREFACE.

CANDID READER,

TEDIOUS prefaces are seldom very edifying, and do not always turn out an embellishment to a book. All I can say in behalf of the following pages is to assure thee, that, if my heart deceives me not, the edification of thy soul was the Author's aim, in the composition. There are two sorts of people whose fury I have small expectations of evading; these are, such as throw entirely away the Christian name, and those whose zeal runs altogether in the channel of party-interest — who are wedded to their own humours more than to truths, and can bear with nothing, unless it come from men of an entire uniform stature with themselves.

I doubt not, Christian reader, thou wilt discern several blemishes, which may have escaped the Author's notice; but I hope they are only such, as will not injure faith or holiness; and therefore, the spirit of the gospel will dispose thee to censure with the Christian's temper, as well as with the criticks eye, remembering that both thou and I are erring mortals; and such smitting will be regarded by me as a kindness, and an excellent oil. Only let me entreat, that thou rather use Christian freedom with myself, than give vent to thy passions behind my back, and thereby entitle thyself to the odious character of a calumniator. If thou findest any helps herein to thy devotion, give all the glory to God; and for what is amiss, let the blame fall on the Author—I shall only farther add a few words.

To the congregation, among whom I labour in the
work of the GOSPEL.

My dear Friends,

TIS a most awakening consideration, to think of that awful appearance, which ministers and people are to make before the judgment seat of Christ. It will then be a most dreadful sight, to behold ministers appearing as witnesses against any of their congregation; or to see a people pointing out faithless and perfidious pastors, as the instruments of their ruin.

May it be my constant concern, to act such a part in the discharge of my duty towards you, as that the blood of no individual may be required at my hands, in the great day; and may you be determined, by the communications of divine grace, in all things to believe and practise, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In your perusal of this, or any other religious book, I would particularly advise you to devote, at least, as much time in prayer, and in meditation on what you read, as you employ in reading itself; and let it be your ambition to be found doers of the word, and not hearers only.—And, should you be upbraided with any thing that may be found unguarded in the following sheets, attempt not to vindicate but where you have clear and solid ground; and in that case, hear the Antagonist with patience, and answer him in the spirit of meekness; but remember, 'tis unbecoming the Christian character to encourage a spirit of rancor or wrath, and therefore, let your mildness and moderation be known unto all men.

H. I.

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MEDITATIONS

AND

REASONINGS.

MEDITATION I.

On the being of a God.

NOW, my soul, the gloomy night has again retired, and made way for the approach of another morning. See, how yonder sun lifts up his majestick head, and scatters his chearing rays through the hemisphere! How regular are the circular successions of night and day; and how obsequious each, to His appointment, who, in the beginning, said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* 'Tis then the language of fools, and of none but fools, to alledge *there is no God.* Revolve the leaves in the vast volume of nature, and you'll see the extravagancy of ATHEISM, written in large capitals; painted in lively colours. Even there hath JEHOVAH portrayed himself, in so clear and legible characters; that all may run, read, and understand. Listen,

B

O my

O my soul, and allow this morning's attendance, to hear the voice of universal creation; view the celestial fabrick, and you'll easily be prevailed with to abandon the heterodox opinion of those, who dreamed that the world had its existence, by a casual concourse of atoms.

Don't you see, how the universal system of things point to an infinite architect, as the productive cause of the whole! contemplate the arched heavens, and admire the majestic view! how august their magnificence! how immeasurable their extent! see them garnished with innumerable shining orbs sun, moon, and stars; all qualified and disposed with divers sizes, and different motions; without offering the least hindrance or obstruction, one to another; and remaining without any natural change of their course, since the early moment of their first existence! fix thine eye upon the globe of this earth, the proper habitation of men and beasts, and behold its vast size—How is it distinguished with hills, woods, vallies and pastures. Enameled with variety of herbs, grafs, flowers and leaves—Moistned with rivers, springs and waters, running through the ponderous body, like so many veins or artery's! see its numerous inhabitants, of different species, kinds, and qualities. How largely are its capacious bowels replenished, with choice varieties of inestimable jewels, and mineral concretions! and yet, notwithstanding of all this congenial and natural weight, besides the supervenient poise, both in the bowels and upon the surface thereof, it stands as a ball, supported in the spacious air, by no other base or pillar, but the same omnipotent arm that made it. *Where wast thou* (says God to Job, chap. 38.) *when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding? who hath laid the measures thereof if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? whereupon*
are

are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof.

Hence descend, my soul, and survey the liquid element in the immense ocean; and instantly thou art plunged into an ocean of new wonders. The threatening surges environ our globe, and contain such amazing varieties, as made David cry out, *Psal. civ. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches, so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.* The extended gulph is ever receiving, yet overflows not its banks, nor vomits out its waters upon us: in it is a continual turmoyl of raging billows, that rest not night or day, and yet the level shore is fixed for its impregnable bulwark. The mighty God of Jacob hath *even* shut up the sea with doors, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.*

Again, O my soul, canst thou observe the regular motion of bodies, and deny the existence of a Deity? The motion of every body must arise from some certain cause, and if inferior bodies are moved by the influence of superior; the motion of superior bodies, about their respective spheres, must needs be from a higher orb, or from the *Primum mobile*. But to alledge, that this *Primum mobile* moves of it self, would overthrow the established axiom, that nothing is moved but by some other being: or was it urged, that the first moveable is moved by some other superior cause, then the enquiry would start anew, who moveth that other? And so a progress must be made from one to another, either to an infinity, which is absurd; or else, you must sist in some supream primary agent, some Being distinct from matter, who gives motion to all things, and is without mutability himself; and this is none but

God, the supreme being, and the infinite Author of all existence *. Nor is it a mean evidence of the important truth; that all things act for some certain end, whereunto they are directed and appointed. The bird, by secret instinct, builds his nest; the fox provides his den; the spider weaves his curious web, with the exactest rules of geometrical proportion; the bee contrives its various and uniform cells of the honey-comb. What then can direct nature herself, seeing, by natural instinct, every creature pursues the various ends of its creation? Be it ever granted, my soul, that the supream Creator of all existence, is the grand director of universal nature. Canst thou view, O my soul, canst thou behold the subordination of all creatures, and see them so cordially conspiring, in promoting the common service; and art thou not convinced, that ATHEISM is big with absurdity? See the heavens, ministring advantage to this lower world; the waters moistning the ground; the air opening and cherishing it; the sun warming, quickning and enlivening it; the moon and stars fructifying it, by their renewed influences! the earth hoards not up its treasures altogether for itself, but to afford nourishment for man and beasts.

• Say, my soul, didst thou view some glorious and mighty army, excellently arrayed in their respective martial order, divided into ranks, squadrons, and com-

* There are but three possible ways of accounting for motion, either by supposing that there has been an infinite succession of impulses communicated from one body to another from eternity, without any active principle either in matter or without it; or that there is an active principle in matter, that is self-active, and hath motion essential to it, or else that there is some being distinct from matter, that is the cause of its motion. I will shew, that neither of the two first ways of accounting for motion, can possibly be the truth; and therefore that the cause of motion must be some being distinct from matter, &c. See Gurdon's sermons at Boyle's lecture.

companies, with officers and soldiers, all in a gradual subordination to one another; moving, marching and chearfully pursuing the same common end; and that, without difference, discord, or tumultuous clamour;—couldst thou behold this, and not rationally conclude, that such a well-disciplined army must needs have some expert general, to whose command, they are all obsequious? What infallible ground must thou then have, my soul, from the coherence, consent and amazing subordination of all the ranked beings, in this spacious universe, to conclude, that there is inevitably one eternal monarch, to whom they owe allegiance—to whom they all pay homage, and by whose universal power, and supream authority, every creature is appointed its proper station, office and task, to be exercised in.

Enlarge thy contemplations, O my soul, and admire the marvelous providence, art and wisdom that is displayed, in the production of every creature. There is nothing, however mean or little thou mayest imagine it, within the compass of air, earth or sea; but, by taking a deliberate survey, we shall find unerring wisdom manifested in its contrivance †. Attentively consider the most contemptible insect, and you'll find it a compend of wonders; you'll see such an excellent contexture, symmetry, and proportion of all its parts and members; such correspondence of instruments, so well adapted, coherent and subordinate to one another, that they can neither be the issue of heathenish fate, nor the product of foolish fortune, as *Lucretius* fondly imagined: neither could these bodies croud together, by the casual concurrence of innumerable atoms

B 3

just

† A late Reverend writer (of our own country) very well observes, that divine wisdom and power shines in the formation of an *Ant*, as well as in an *Elephant*. Millar's list. of the O. Test.

justled together, in an ultra-mundane space. No, they are the contrivance of infinite wisdom, and the product of omnipotent power.

In fine; how absurd. O my soul, how egregiously absurd were it to deny the being of a God? A truth granted by the universal consent of nations, in all places, times and ages. What people, kindred or language, under the sun, but pay some homage to the notion of a Deity? Where *ever* did avowed Atheism possess any part of the world; and who have not subscribed their acknowledgment of a supreme Being? Nay, you may as well find a nation without their soul, as without their God. Egyptians, and other barbarous nations worshipped imaginary and inanimate gods; and the Athenians will have an altar, rather to an *unknown* God, than have no God at all. The Heathens were so filled with the apprehensions of a Deity, that they framed a God, in their imagination, almost for every different mechanic; for their corn, wine, and oil, etc. Hence the Romans multiplied their Gods above thirty thousand *.

Thus, the being of a Deity seems to have been a truth taught *even* in Heathen seminaries—a truth, which has become no less difficult for men entirely to abandon, or obliterate, than to take leave of themselves, and bid adieu to their own existence. What horror in mind, what tempestuous storms in conscience are, now and then, raised in that man, who presages some mischief to himself, beyond the ordinary course of nature, upon the discovery of some enormous crime? And whence this, but from a secret conviction, that there's some superintendent over nature, and the material frame of things,

* The absurdity of Polytheism, and the vanity of Paganism is exposed by the Author last quoted, in a preceeding note. See his *hist. of propagation of Christianity*.

things, who is both a spectator and avenger of iniquity? Let the Atheist, for a while, dispute; sometimes to forbear trembling is beyond the reach of his power; and was he possess'd of sufficient ingenuity to himself, his secret fears would confute his unbelief. See what a surprizing alteration is in the Atheist's reasoning *now* (from what usually appears) when the harbingers of death come to treat with him, to tell him of an approaching dissolution, and awaken him with the apprehensions of that provoked Deity, whom he formerly mocked. He, at length, begins to turn serious, and to acknowledge that there appears equal ground to believe, there is a God; as to believe his own existence; and the idea he at last obtains of such a supreme being gives no less evidence, that there is a God, than his own thinking assures him, that he exists, and that he has a thinking faculty. And yet does he remain an Atheist? Ah how many of both sexes would startle at the profession, who are yet zealots in practical Atheism! ‡ Go on thou, O my soul, in paying that reverence and adoration to this eternal Being, which he is so justly intitled unto. This God is thy God, therefore with filial dread, and burning love, fall down before him, and say, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Rev. iv. O what a safe and secure harbour have believers to fly unto, in the day of distress! The Lord Jehovah

B 4

him-

‡ Atheists have been but rare since nature's birth;
Till now She-Atheists ne'er appear'd on earth,
Ye men of deep researches, say, whence springs
This daring character, in tim'rous things,
Who start at *feathers*, from an insect fly,
A match for nothing—but the Deity.

Young's Satyrs.

himself is their refuge: the mighty God of Jacob is their friend; with this the lamenting prophet cheered up his dejected spirit, *Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever*, Lam. v. 19.

Thy God, O my soul,——this thy God is unchangeable in his nature; for with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He is also immutable in his eternal purposes and decrees. Men frequently alter their first resolutions, because they perceive not the good or the evil, the conveniency or inconveniency that may be the result of their designs: therefore, when any mistake or error is discovered, every wise man will retract the will and purpose he had before. Ay, but this cannot happen with God, who by one simple clear intuitive act of his knowledge, saw, from eternity, whatever can possibly come to pass in time. Hence he speaks of himself, *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed*, Mal. iii. 6. *God is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numb. xxiii. 19 *.

Beware then, my soul, of listening to satanical suggestions. Doth the tempter say, that the Lord hath utterly forsaken thee, and changed from the former love he bore towards thee, because *perhaps* thou art getting the bitter piles of affliction to drink.

Re-

* Where any change takes place, it must be either by a progress from perfection to imperfection, or from imperfection to perfection; but in neither of these respects can there be any change in God——Not the first, because all his infinite perfections are essential to his nature and being; and his being is necessary and independent; as it ever was, so it can never cease to be—Not the last, because in him is the infinite fulness of all perfection, which is incapable of any increase or accession. Thus, the acquiring any new perfection, is repugnant to his infinite being; and the loss of any of his perfections, is contrary to the necessity of his being.

Repell the temptation, for thy God is unchangeable, and will never forget nor forsake his children in affliction. Can an affectionate mother forget her sucking child? Yea, the love of parents may be warm to their children, at one time; and become cold, and languid at another; and can this be the case with thy heavenly parent, O my soul? No, take his own word for it, *Isa. liv. 10. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* It may be, some disconsolate child of God is now complaining, that former friends have changed their countenance; riches have taken eagle's wings; health and strength begin to fail. Be it so, O happy mourner, thou hast still solid ground of comfort, *this thy God is, and is always the same, a God who will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

It was the saying of an eminent saint——*From everlasting to everlasting thou art God, Psal. xc. 2.* Eternity belongeth to the Lord, and altho' it would be bold presumption for finite mortals, to pretend to arrive at a full conception of this unfathomable abyss; yet eternity is inseparable from the divine nature and essence, considered as it abideth indefinitely, and unmeasurably, without beginning or without end. Time is measured, and is made use of for measuring the continuance of other things; it had a beginning, and will have an end; but the highest flight of a soaring mind falls infinitely short of eternity's boundless length.

Time is fluid and passing; so much is already gone, so much is to come, and a moment is only present; and this present moment hath no abiding, but passeth away incontinent. Are not all temporal pleasures, my soul, thus fleeting and transitory?

Wer't

Wer't thou ever so eager to arrest them, they remain not ; they no sooner come, but they are gone ; they are no sooner bred, than they die. Yes, but while time runs, like the current of a rapid river, eternity remains as it were a bank standing, that can never wear away. Isa. xl. 28. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? He is the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity.* Is. lvii. 51. Yes, believer, thy God is an infinite, immutable and eternal God ; he is a God of justice, and a God of mercy ; he is a God of wisdom, and a God of power ; he is a God of holiness, and a God of truth ; and this great I AM THAT I AM † hath proclaimed himself, *the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ; and will by no means clear the guilty.* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.— This omnipotent God, that now reigns and rules by his word and spirit, in the hearts of his people, will hereafter bring them to that heavenly Canaan, where the glory of his wisdom and mercy shall be manifested, in their eternal salvation ; while the glory of his power and justice will be displayed in the everlasting damnation of such atheistical wretches, as would never have him to rule over them. Then, my soul, will the happy day dawn, in which all the children of God shall be for ever rescued from every satanical temptation—then shall sin be entirely rooted out and dethroned ; death it self will then get a fatal stroke, and God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people.

But

† Our great Creator, by this revelation of himself, does in a manner exclude every thing else from a real existence, and distinguishes himself from his creatures, as the only being which truly and really exists.

Addison's Evidences.

But if these meditations are founded on truth, and if there be a God, as the voice of reason and revelation proclaims, what will become of you, O Atheistical wretches? Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver you out of his avenging hand. It is a fearful, Oh! it is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God.

MEDITATION II.

On the Immortality of the human Soul.

CALL in thy thoughts, my soul, they have been too long roving abroad. Now the night approaches—let this evening's meditation be about thyself. Say, what art thou? 'Tis evident from the Redeemer's own words, there is a possibility of thy being lost, *Matth. xvi. 26.* Does this loss import thy annihilation, thy desisting to exist, when thou leaves this crazy body? No, that once granted would recommend the *Epicurean*-resolution, *Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die.* Which of the two philosophers acted the wisest part, he who never went abroad, without laughing immoderately at the folly of men?—Or he, who could never view the misery of the world without excessive weeping and sorrow! be it thy immediate business to examine thyself, and contemplate thy own worth, and, mean time, drop a tear of pity o'er these thoughtless creatures, who cast away for vanity their own souls. Oh! the loss of

of thee, my soul, could not be counterballanced, by the whole extent of creation *.

What says Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and all the Eastern sages about thee? They declare, with one voice, both thy excellency and immortality. 'Tis thy noble faculty of thinking that animates--that actuates this body; that discovers any knowledge of God or the creature; and without thee, this mortal frame would instantly lose its vigour, would become pale and putrified—Thy soaring cogitation traceth the heavens, investigates the planets, contemplates the earth, sails round the ocean, and fetches in all these discoveries of nature, which philosophic genius's have obtained—Will, judgment, perception, imagination, memory, understanding, and reason, are the operations of thy essence—These cardinal virtues, justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance are the ornaments of thy beauty.

The other day, I pitied an unnatural wretch, who profanely supplicated his Maker, to damn his own soul. But this disagreeable monitor, brutal as he was, put me in mind of thy immortality, O my soul. 'Tis true thou art not so essentially immortal, as to include an utter impossibility, and involve a repugnancy to thy essence to be destitute of life: in this sense, immortality belongs to thy Maker: yet there's a natural immortality thou canst lay claim to; as having no principle in thy self, naturally tending to an-

- Say, know'st thou what it is? or what thou art?
- Know'st thou th' importance of a soul immortal?
- Behold this midnight glory; worlds on worlds!
- Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze;
- Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;
- Then weigh the whole; one soul out-weighs them all;
- And call th' astonishing magnificence
- Of unintelligent creation poor.

Night-Thoughts.

annihilation. The voice of nations ascribes this to the human soul: however wild the imaginary fancies of some of the heathen world have been, in dreaming, that the soul, after forsaking the body, retires to groves, woods, islands, or the famous Elysian fields; yet, these conceptions would seem to indigitate an instinct of the soul's immortality.

But examine this point more narrowly, O my soul; 'tis of the utmost importance to know and believe; and that without which thy *ALL* hereafter is lost. Is it a mistake to say, thou art immortal; or wilt thou allow thy immortality to be a mere conjecture? No, the momentuous truth is obvious, both from reason and revelation. The principles of philosophy demonstrate thy immortality: the soul is a simple indivisible being, and therefore, in itself, is not subject to separation of parts. Death, 'tis true, dissolves and separates the essential and constitutive parts of man, *viz.* soul and body. But while the body is dispersed into thousands of atoms, the soul, being an immaterial substance, is incapable of such a division, and therefore is immortal. Say further, my soul, art thou not capable to act, independent of this body, and of all other matter? how often dost thou vigorously stir, in extacies, and exert thyself, in dreams, when this mortal frame is lulled into profound sleep!

Nay, my soul, was this point once to be conceded, while thou art well; whence is it, that so many have been suddenly convinced of their immortality, when groaning on the confines of eternity? Men are variously affected on a death-bed, with fear or hope, grief or joy, and whence can this flow, but from a tacit sense of immortality, a secret conviction, that the soul dies not with the body; but is capable of well or woe, when time itself is no more? Why doth the sinner's courage thus fail him, and his

his wonted boastings, all of sudden, converted into fearful pangs and tremendous throws?

But listen, my soul, and give attendance to a more sure word of prophecy, *Matth. x. 28. Fear him who can cast both soul and body into hell.* *Psal. xlix. 8. The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.* The precious blood of the Son of God was the price of thy redemption; he made his soul an offering for sin, and shall I ruin my soul in sinful pursuits? O that men would duly consider the excellency of an immortal soul! what comfortable views of immortality have the martyrs and witnesses of Christ arrived unto, when, in the midst of extream tortures, their faces were filled with the most shining composure! no doubt, a natural stupidity, dulness of disposition, a malcrases of body may extenuate the force of pain, and an obstinate perverse resolution may suppress querelous outcrys, under exquisite agony: but not only to bear the cross patiently, but to embrace it pleasantly; not only, not to be despairing and repining, but to be rejoicing in the midst of flames, as if it were a bed of roses, demonstrates the undeniable truth, that there is something noble within, which neither fire nor fagot, virulence nor violence, men nor devils can devour or destroy: hence the apostle, *2 Cor. v. For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* O how chearfully may the souls of believers wing their flight from these mortal bodies, to enter into those heavenly mansions, where an eternal spring and undisturbed repose prevails! ‡

And

‡ The world recedes; it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:

Lend,

And now, O God, thou art my hiding-place; rescue my soul from destruction, my darling from the lion. May so precious a jewel never be entrusted to my own keeping, lest, like *Adam*, I should squander my stock; or, like *Esau*, should sell my birth-right; or, like the prodigal, should waste my substance. May I never be tempted to confide in presumptuous merit; nor imagine of gaining heaven by so treacherous an advocate as my own works. Never, never venture, O my soul, to attempt scaling the walls of heaven, by this deceitful ladder; that will of its own accord, at last, tumble down in pieces—Lord, into thy hands I recommend my spirit. Antichrist, with all his cursed train of artillery, his sprinklings, crossings, prayers to saints, and soul-masses are unsafe and antiscip-tural guardians: but Christ's armour is a sure defence. Oh may the shield of faith, the breast-plate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation be my constant safeguard, against all the fiery darts of the devil.

Say then, are they not all fools and madmen, who throw away their souls, for the transitory pleasures of this life? The question was proposed by him, who is the wisdom of God, *What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?* The world and all its pleasures cannot countervail the loss of an immortal soul; and he who loses his soul for the whole creation, makes truly a bad bargain, to his unspeakable and irreparable loss. Yea, and how many repeated disappointments has

Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!

O grave! where is thy victory?

O death! where is thy sting?

Pope's dying Christians.

has the world given to these proud mortals, who were aspiring after its reduction to one universal monarchy? True, the limits and boundarys of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian and Roman territories, were exceeding ample and large; but yet they never extended so far, as to run from one end of the line to the other; neither were any scepters of sovereignty ever swayed, from pole to pole. No, there were still many unknown places in the world, which never came within the verge or circle of their most extended dominions.

But, supposing the whole world was conquered, at the expence of losing a soul; dear,—exceeding dear would the purchase be. Is it not then the highest degree both of weakness and wretchedness, for men to submit to a certain and palpable danger, for so uncertain an advantage and attainment—an attainment to which none hath hitherto advanced, and, for ought we know, none is likely to gain. How destructive to souls, have the boundless ambition of mens hearts after earthly things been! how many are of the like humour with that Grecian philosopher, who is said to have entreated the gods, that he might behold the sun very nigh, and comprehend the largeness, form and beauty thereof, tho' he should immediately be burned by its heat!

The covetous man cannot endure to look on the world at a distance, and to enjoy the comfortable use thereof with moderation; he cannot be satisfied, unless he has it folded up in his arms, and grasped within his heart, should it be at the loss of his soul. These avaritious creatures are much like young *Phaeton*; for want of skill to manage the furious horses of their inordinate appetites, at last they fall headlong from the chariots of their pleasure; and destroy both soul and body, in the fatal conflagration, in the end. Nor must we imagine that 'tis these, and

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only these who enjoy the largest possessions, that are in danger of losing their immortal souls. The children of poverty run no less risque of having the charge brought against them, *that they are lovers of pleasures—of worldly, sinful, and sensual pleasures, more than lovers of God.*

Since then, the souls of men run such a hazard, from an inordinate pursuit of the world, and seeing it so frequently happens, that they, who most abound in wealth, are least prone to scatter liberally among the indigent, and to treasure up to themselves uncorruptible riches *; it may not be without its own use, that thou pause a little, my soul, on this subject; and consider, how much worldly pleasure is below thy regard, in comparison of these spiritual delights, with which the irregenerate man is altogether unacquainted.

Did one arrive to such a height of worldly preferment, as to become Emperor and sole monarch of the whole world; and enjoy all the glory, pleasure and treasures in it, at his absolute command; yet these would fall infinitely short of affording true contentment, solid joy, and tranquillity of mind; for they can give nothing but a false and imaginary happiness. Ay, but alas, the loss of an immortal soul is a very real, and unspeakable misery. It was long since taught in some of the philosophic seminaries, That fools and hypochondriacs, who fancied themselves lords of great dominions and masters of large possessions, were no less happy, than such as

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really

- * Ah little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power and affluence surround;
——How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms,
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery———

Thomson's Seasons.

really possessed these treasures ; because worldly happiness, in itself, is but fleeting and imaginary, like some flashing motions, in an unregenerate mind. But, O how solid and satisfactory is that joy, which arises from a well grounded hope, of heaven's being prepared for the soul, for ever to dwell in !

Away then, my soul, away with these false notions and ideas of happiness, which are confined to the things of this earth ; bid adieu to the sinful pleasures, and cheating delusions of a passing world ; and let the serious thoughts of a future and eternal state possess all my heart. The day is hastening on, when we must bid an everlasting farewell to the world itself ; and what folly should we then bewray, if our precious souls were cast away, for its low, and transitory pleasures ? How little comfort or solace would it afford on a death-bed, to cast a reflecting eye, upon these gilded and bewitching vanities, which betray so many precious souls, into ineffable ruin ! that pleasure must be but airy and fantastic, which has a short last, and ushers in ruin in the end ; and thus it is with all the pleasures of sin.

How justly is the world emblemized by a sea of glass, mingled with fire ; by a *sea*, on account of its ebbing and flowing, its fluctuation, inconstancy, and mutability ; its restless waves rolling from shore to shore, as the world rolls from hand to hand——to a sea of *glass*, because of its brittleness and fragility——to a sea *mingled with fire*, because of its daily wasting, and drawing nigh to an end. May it never obtain my soul for one of its votaries !

The wisest and most opulent of earthly sovereigns, who understood the value of worldly things, not only by speculation and theory ; but also by experience, gives his verdict thereof, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Eccles. i. 2. And indeed the experience of six thousand years attests the truth of

Solomon's assertion. Nay, O my soul, thou mayest know it too, from thine own experience: for, how often hast thou been woefully disappointed; finding those things wherein thou promisedst thyself happiness, not to answer thy expectation! In thy wild pursuits after felicity, hast thou not heard the voice of pleasure, of profit and honour, each calling aloud **HAPPINESS IS NOT IN ME?** But yet, if, after all, O my soul, thou wilt not be deterred from hankering after the vain delusion, let the friendly voice of the *Saviour* be attended to—*Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to life eternal;* and that other of his inspired apostle, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* John ii. 15.

How deceiving is this world, *frequently*, to the souls of men! it blows them up with fair promises, with the hopes of immense riches, a lasting health, and long life; when, in reality, its courtiers and admirers often live not out *half their days*, Psal. lv. 23. And however sweetly its voice may sound in a worldling's ears, 'twill prove in the end, but an empty echo; 'twill act like a *deceitful Crocodile*, or a *charming Siren*; and after it retains many of its prisoners for a series of years, at last it drowns the miserable captives, in the floods of eternal destruction. In what a variety of instances, does the world act such a part to the souls of men, as Laban did to Jacob; when, after seven years servitude for Rachel, he at last deceived him with Leah? It treats its admirers, as Delilah did Sampson, it endeavours *once* to lull men asleep in its bosom, and then delivers them into the hands of spiritual Philistines: or, as Judas did with Christ, it salutes with a kiss, and then betrays: or, as Joab did to Abner, it embraces with the one arm, and gives a mortal wound with the other. Get up then, O my soul, and wing thy flight.

flight above the low entertainments, that are to be found among the men of this world †. Remember, thou art immortal, and prepare for spending an eternity in heaven-----O thou, in whose hands is the heart of every man, prepare my soul for living with Jesus. *Amen and Amen.*

M E D I T A T I O N III.

On the Divine authority of Scripture revelation.

O*H how love I thy law ; it is my meditation all the day.* No doubt, the great business of Satan is to throw odiums and aspersions on the sacred oracle : and now, that I am going to shut my ears from all other subjects, and revolve the leaves of the sacred volume ; be it my care, this morning, to call in some evidences, of this book's divine authority and inspiration. Thereby I may the better resist the highest efforts of the devil, in my perusal of
God's

† 'Tis storied of a famous Cynick, that he was thus accosted by a potent conqueror, *Thou art a poor man, and stands in need of assistance ; ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee.* To which the philosopher replied, *Which of us two seems to be the most needful object ?* I, who desire nothing but my pile of wood, and my bit of bread ; or thou, who (altho' the great King of Macedonia) dost expose thyself to so many dangers, for enlarging the boundarys of thy kingdom ? Upon which the monarch, greatly admiring this philosophic magnanimity is said to have cryed out, *If I was not Alexander, I would wish to be Diogenes*—I mention this story for an evidence, that even Heathens themselves conceded this point, *That true happiness did not consist in the abundance of what worldly riches a man possessed ; but in his solid tranquility and peace of spirit.*---Hence the apothegm of Pythagaros, *It is better to have a settled, stayd and peaceable mind, tho' lying upon the ground ; than to be rocked with care, and tortur'd with trouble, tho' stretched on a bed of gold.*

God's word. Be it thy business, my soul, thus to arm thyself, as thou wouldst not be tempted to undermine the very foundation of religion. Take away the divine authority of scripture revelation, and immediately a door is opened, to let in floods of carnality, Epicureanism, and Deism. This book is God's scepter, by which the subjects of heaven are ruled; 'tis the light of our eyes, by which the mysteries of God are discovered; 'tis the food of our souls, without which the graces of the spirit languish; 'tis the sword of the spirit, by which enemies are overthrown; and therefore, 'tis undoubtedly that against which open batteries are raised, by a Deistical generation. What do thy meditations afford thee, O my soul, in favours of these pages? Does not their antiquity plead for their divine authority? The most antient system must have proceeded from God: for since man was created for the service of his Maker, it became necessary, that some revelation of the divine will should be made him, either by writing it in his heart, or setting it before his eyes.

AGAIN, the divine authority of these excellent and sacred institutions, wrapt up in the scriptures, is obvious from their date, which begins with creation itself; in respect of which, all other Heathenish schemes are but as up-starts of yesterday. Examine the character of its penmen, and see how much their sincerity and integrity discovers the important truth †. As they deliver nothing in their own name, so they arrogate to themselves no praise; but they speak in the name of God, and ascribe the glory to Jehovah. They taught not divine doctrine, that they might

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† A modern writer observes, as marks of the most disinterested and undesigning sincerity, in the inspired penmen.— *They record the failings of their favourite and most illustrious heroes; without concealing the punishment, inflicted on such miscarriages.*

Hervey's remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's letters,

thereby make a purchase of earthly stores; but they were satisfied to be contemned, scoffed, and put to death for the precious truths, which they delivered. Yea, they omitted not to record, what even tended to their own shame and dishonour, that God might be thereby glorified; they acknowledge their infirmities, that the truth might be preserved, that future generations, seeing the weakness of the strong, might never presume in their own strength, nor despair of divine mercy——Thus Moses conceals not the fault of our grand parents——The drunkenness of Noah—The incest of Lot—The lie of Isaac—the bloody sin of Simeon and Levi——the rebellions of Israel——the idolatry of Aaron—the murmurings of Miriam——the sons of Aaron's offering strange fire. Nay, he records his own impatience and unbelief; for which he was refused entrance into the promised land; as a standing monument to posterity, of his weakness and infirmity. Further, O my soul, does not the mighty opposition which the devil and his instruments have made against this word, in endeavouring to root it out of the world, evidently show, that it is the book of God, the patronage and protection of which, he himself hath undertaken, against all the attempts of hell? Have not men and devils, in former and later periods, exerted their united strength against the scriptures? And why? Because they knew, that, by this volume, their works of darkness are made manifest; because 'tis so pure and holy, the wicked are incensed against it. 'Tis the word, by which sinners are condemned; therefore they hate it, as a prisoner abhors to hear the sentence of death pronounced against him, from the mouth of a just judge. Yet, how fruitless have their attempts been? The more they raged against the word of God, the more its glory spread through the whole earth; the more they

they endeavoured to keep it down, like the palm-tree, the more it flourished. As these, who attempt to stop the current of a mighty river, only make it swell the higher, and overflow its banks: so, when the devil and his agents have attempted to stay the heavenly stream, that flows from God's sanctuary, the more it diffuses itself, *maugre* all their malice. Thus, omnipotent power supporting it, hath also pursued, with utter ruin and devastation, those that violently opposed its truths, or persecuted its professors; such as Herod, Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, Julian the apostate, and others; who, by their shameful and horrible deaths, testified and declared these very truths to be the word of God, which, through their lives, they had persecuted.

Nor are the amazing miracles, by which the scriptures were confirmed, mean evidences, that they are the word of God. What stronger arguments could any one demand, than the red sea's dividing asunder—the sun going backward to Hezekiah, and standing still to Josuah—the blind recovering their sight—the dumb speaking—the deaf hearing, the lame walking, and the dead arising?

Think, O my soul, on the matter handled in this sacred oracle; and meditate on the end, to which its laws do point. The subjects treated of in this volume, are the glorious works of God in creation, redemption, and preservation, divine mercy manifested to his people, and inflexible justice executed against his enemies, in overthrowing their designs, restraining their violence, turning their counsel to foolishness, and plunging themselves at least headlong into destruction—Turn over every other leaf, in the most copious and best furnished library, and you'll see their subjects and the manner of handling them, intimate the whole to be human composition; this book the BIBLE, only excepted. Some

are industrious to polish human arts; others set out large histories of actions, counsels, success, policys, and enterprizes of mortals; wrote in such a way that we know them, at first sight, to be indited by the spirit of man; but all things in this volume are spiritual, and appertaining to God. As the creation, so also the government of the wide universe is, in the scripture, only ascribed unto Jehovah, that he may have the whole praise of his own works. *Here*, famous victories are not ascribed to the wisdom of a Chieftain, nor to the valour of a soldier; but to the Lord of hosts alone: and whence can such self-denial flow, but from the divine spirit, which moveth man, contrary to his own nature, to deny himself the praise, and give the whole of it unto his Maker! *Here*, the singular blessings of the church-militant are never attributed to worldly friends, or good fortune—they are not ascribed to assiduous industry or indefatigable labour; no, 'tis only to the blessing of heaven, and goodness of God, that grateful acknowledgment is made, by these inspired writers. AGAIN, the wicked's destruction is not *here* ascribed, *simply*, to the power and cunning of their enemies, much less to blind chance, or outward accident; but to the almighty arm, exercising divine justice in their condign punishment for sin, and is it not easie to discover, O my soul, that, in human writings, this is not always the case? What numbers of Authors write to display their own wit, learning, and eloquence? How many are the attempts of this nature, to exalt the praise of men above the clouds! Some extol the fortitude of generals; some commend the resolution of soldiers; others cry up the advantages in victories, whether by the place, the sun, wind, rain, or other circumstances; and men are thence gradually led to forget the Lord of hosts, that disposes of all things, causes and events.

Does

Does not grandeur and majesty run, thro' every line of this sacred volume? Tho' written in a plain and familiar stile, condescending to the most illiterate capacity, yet, is not the deep wisdom of God therein set forth, and the profound mysteries of religion therein most amply comprehended? Under this vail of plain speech, shines such divine wisdom and authority, that all human performances, however much adorned with the garnishing flowers of eloquence, and quickned with the striking conceits of wit, can never so deeply penetrate the heart,—can never so forcibly work upon the affections, nor so powerfully incline the will, to embrace virtue and avoid vice. Through the whole of sacred writ is displayed such majesty, as only becomes the uncontrollable sovereign of the wide universe. Who, except this supream monarch of heaven and earth, could indiscriminately thus address himself to All—could enjoin obedience upon prince and people, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, without the least difference or respect of persons; expressly requiring *this* to be done, and *that* to be avoided, under the promise of everlasting life, or the pain of eternal death? The divine laws of this book are not confined to the outward conversation of men, requiring only external obedience (which is the utmost that human laws can respect, because the lawgiver sees no further) but the law of God requireth obedience, *especially* in the heart, and does not only prohibit consent to sin, but the first springs and motions of the heart to evil. Who then can make laws for the conscience; or, if any should attempt to make them, who could either reward the obedient, or punish the disobedient, but he *who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins?*

Further, my soul, contemplate the glorious mysteries wrapt up in scripture revelation. Are they not

not far superior to the reach of human understanding; too profound for reason to plunge into the depths thereof? True, the light of nature sufficiently demonstrates the being of a God; that truth is written in large characters, through the extensive volume of creation, so that 'tis almost impossible to behold the one, without acknowledging the other. But that God, being one in essence, should be distinguished into a trinity of persons, without division of substance, or confusion of persons, is peculiar to revelation to proclaim; and is a truth, which reason could not comprehend, much less could it invent—That the universal system of things had their being from God, nature clearly teaches; since they have an end, they must also have had a beginning; and since the commencement of their existence, they have been hastening to a dissolution; one effect brings us to its cause, and that cause to a superior one; and that to another, till at last we come to the supreme author of existence; a being independent of himself, and upon whom all others depend: but that this beautiful order should have been brought out of confusion, this light out of darkness, and the compleat system of things brought from the womb of nothing, by the almighty FIAT, surpasseth the comprehension of shallow reason——That man is now reduced to a wretched state, is not only the doctrine taught us by sense and reflection, but by experience also: but how to get rid of this misery, and reach eternal bliss, is beyond the pursuit of man's wisdom, and is only revealed in the oracles of inspiration.——That the second person of the glorious trinity should assume our nature, and therein perform a perfect obedience to the divine law, should wade an ocean of misery, and undergo the most tormenting and ignominious of deaths, to reconcile us to God, and reinstate us in the favour of the almighty; that his merit should be-

become ours, by virtue of that union whereby he becometh our head, and we his members; which union is made up *principally* by the spirit, *instrumentally* by faith—these are the great peculiarities of divine revelation, the discoveries made from this little, precious, and valuable volume. A volume also, which abounds with surprising paroxysms, as, *that the cross is the way to the crown; through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God, &c.*

Nor canst thou forget, O my soul, with what surprising exactness all scripture prophecies have been fulfilled, in their due time. Such as, that the *seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; the posterity of Cham should be accursed; Abraham should have a son; his posterity should be bond-men in Egypt; Judah's posterity should have dominion over the other tribes; the scepter should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came; * the people of Israel should be carried into captivity, and hence rescued by Cyrus; the seventy years of their abode there; together with Daniel's four monarchies, and his seventy weeks, &c.* Whence are all these important events so distinctly foretold, and so precisely fulfilled, but from the provident wisdom of God, who foreseeth all things?

But, are not the grand mysteries of divine revelation oftentimes hid from the wise and prudent, and made known to poor babes and sucklings; not by the means of natural reason, but by the testimony of God's own Spirit. Yet, even the *Deist* himself may

* Let the original of this word *Shiloh* be what it will (which some translate to be sent; others his Son, or Child, or his seed; others, quiet, peaceable, pacific, prosperous, and consequently, renowned, august, to whom gifts or offerings shall be made, as *R. Solomon* takes it; others, *whose* is viz. the kingdom) the Messiah or Christ is certainly hereby meant, as all the three *Targums* agree, and the *Talmud*, in the little *Sanhedrim*, chap. xi. and *Baall-Hatturim*, *Bereshit-Rabba*, and many other ancient and modern Jews. *Patrick's Commentary.*

may be so far convinced, as to be silenced in his objections, while still he doubts, whether they are *indeed* the infallible word of God: As the two disciples travelling to Emmaus, upon hearing the scriptures interpreted by an infallible prophet, their hearts glowed within them, and they suspected, that what they heard was more than the word of mortal man; or, as the blind man in the gospel, when his eyes were a little illuminate, discerned men, not as men, but as moving trees; so there may be, at times, a secret conviction raised, even by strength of argument, in the sinner's breast, sufficient to draw from him a confused acknowledgment, that this BIBLE is the word of God. But how different from this, are the discoveries obtained by a lively faith? *Ye have an unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things. The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you,* 1 John ii. 20. 27. Oh, how convincing an argument this, when the sinner perceives, that, by the instrumentality of this word; the *understanding*, which before was blind and full of darkness, is now enlightened; the *heart*, which before was obdurate as the adamant, becomes soft and tender, and melts at the preaching of the law; the *will*, which before was stubborn and obstinate, is inclined to an holy obedience; the *conscience*, which before was dead and seared, begins to control the sinner, and give check to his impiety; the *affections*, formerly inclined to sensual pleasures, are now set upon God, and fixt on things above. In fine, may we not say of the scriptures, as the blind man reasoned with the Pharisees, not from splendid shadows, and fair pretexts, but from undoubted experience? *Doubtless this is a marvellous thing, that you know not whence this man is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes; and if he were not from God, he could not have done this.* John ix.

How

How vain, then, the objection, O my soul, how ridiculous the cavil of prophane wits; that the sublimity of stile, in this book, does not as far transcend other writings, as heaven is more excellent than the earth! It is not usual in a king to play the orator, when he gives out his edicts, nor to use rhetorical figures, and alluring persuasives, when he hath to do with his own subjects; but rather, he peremptorily commands, in phrases full of gravity and authority. Even so, it pleased the supreme monarch of the universe, in the publication of his will, to use a plain and familiar stile; and it better becometh his glorious majesty plainly to command, than to persuade and allure with enticing speeches— Besides, this sacred volume was not written *only* for the use of the learned, but also for the simple and the ignorant; and therefore, it pleased the Lord to speak sometimes in so lofty a stile, as must needs fill the learned with admiration; and yet, so plainly does he condescend to the meanest capacity, that this word of his affords milk to babes, as well as strong meat to such as are riper in knowledge and understanding.

And does not JEHOVAH hereby manifest his power in weakness, his majesty in meanness, and his wisdom in foolishness; for this very end, to make weakness, meanness, and folly serve as foyle to display his wisdom, power, and majesty, the more glorious? Had all the glory of revelation consisted in the dead letter, how would men, like *fools*, have stood admiring the outward curious fabric, without looking at the precious jewels within. But when this treasure is brought in an earthen vessel— this beautiful feature is clothed in mean attire— and divine wisdom is set forth in a clean, neat dress, men are thereby taught to withdraw from the shadow, and contemplate the substance; not to rest in

in the outward letter, but diligently to seek after the inward truth.

Besides, my soul, what is more becoming truth than plainness and simplicity! what need for painting, where there is already perfect beauty? No remarkable art is necessary, to polish and set out a precious diamond; and how less necessary are the ornaments of human eloquence *here*? Ornaments, which might rather darken the beams, than add brilliancy to the lustre of sacred writ! the flowers of rhetoric, the assistance of sophistry are much fitter ornaments for the orations of *Cicero*, than for the oracles of God, which shine with the greatest splendor, when bare and naked.

But, is there not a majesty in Scripture language, superior, far superior to what is to be found any where else? Yes, * let the laborious linguist—let the man of eloquence and address, but make an impartial inquiry, and he will find a sublimity of diction, not to be discovered in any other volume, but these pages of inspiration—Let this word, O my soul, let this infallible guide be thy lanthorn, through the dark regions of this lower world.—Be it the sword of

* Whoever reads the scriptures in their original, will see the truth of this, in every page of that sacred volume; and a late writer much celebrated both for delicacy and accuracy of language, as well as profundity of thought, speaks thus on the dignity of scripture stile. *If any one would judge of the beautys of poetry that are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of speech mix and incorporate with the English language; after having perused the book of Psalms, let him read a literal translation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in these two last such an absurdity and confusion of stile, with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very sensible of what I have been here advancing—*I am very confident whoever reads the gospels, with an heart as much prepared in favours of them, as when he sits down to Virgil or Homer, will find no passage there which is not told with more natural force than any episeide in either of those wits, who were the chief of mere mankind.

Addison's Evidences.

of the spirit, in the dextrous management, and skillful perusal of which, I may both fight and overcome: May, oh may the divine influences of the eternal spirit accompany this word of Christ's patience, and may Zion's matchless sovereign *hereby* spread the report of his own renown, through the distant corners of the habitable world; that the nations of the earth may become the *kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ! Amen and Amen.*

MEDITATION IV.

On the dreadful Nature, and dismal effects of Sin.

THE racking pain and violent disorder, that yesterday laid siege to my body, has now wing'd its flight, and gone: but hast thou also lost the remembrance thereof, O my soul? How anxious was the physician to know the natural cause of my late bodily indisposition; and if his enterprise had miscarried in success, I should have perhaps concluded, that there was some oversight in his attention, or some misfortune in his management. There is, beyond all peradventure, such more immediate natural causes of diseases. But sin is the procuring cause, to be assigned, for every calamity and misery, that befalls us. While David acted the good philosopher, in the case of a famine in Judah, he, at the same time, appears the eminent divine, in discovering so heavy a judgment to be sent, as the punishment for the sin of Saul, and his bloody house.

How odious is the character given of sinners in sacred writ, and how surprizing their carriage!

Prov.

Prov. x. 23. Fools make a mock at sin. What unreasonable folly for a man to sport himself into misery, and yet, none more effectually does so, than he, who sports at impiety. Was it necessary to point out examples, for confirming the mournful reflection, how easy a matter were it to be particular, in more instances than one! In all the chain of misery, to which mankind are subject, sin is the first link that draws the whole after it. What, but *this*, exiled the apostate angels from heaven? Why were our grand parents thrust out of paradise; and cherubims fixed with a flaming sword, to guard every passage to the tree of life, but because of sin? Why did the Lord destroy the old world, with a deluge of waters; and rain down fire and brimstone from heaven, upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*; but because the iniquities, both of the one and the other, had gone up before him? For their *sin*, Ananias and Saphira were struck dead, † and for *sin* Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their accomplices, were swallowed up quick. To enumerate *even* the temporal judgments, recorded in sacred writ, as being sent for the punishment of sin, would be to run a cursory through the divine volume; and how frequently is the punishment adapted to the quality, or quantity of the crime! how awful are the spiritual plagues, that sin exposes a people unto! hardness of heart, blindness of understanding, corruption of affection, perversity of will, do all proceed from this wretched fountain. *But my people Israel would have none of me, therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsel.* Hence it is, that many feel the rod, who cannot understand it; many groan under it, that cannot discern who hath appointed it: like Belshazar,

† For DEATH from SIN no pow'r can separate.

Milton.

zar, who saw the hand-writing of judgment, on the wall, but could not read it; or like the Jews, who mistook the Lord's voice, for the roaring of thundering clouds! Oh sin, thou accursed thing, what rational man would not abhor thee as hell! 'Tis by sin, the great God is affronted, the infinite majesty of heaven and earth is incensed, the supreme legislator of the universe is reflected upon, and it is his authority, that is thereby trampled under foot.

And what audacious wretch will yet dare to laugh at the scrupulosity of such, as tremble to offend an omnipotent sovereign! what more displeasing to any earthly monarch than to despise his laws, reproach his person, and condemn his authority; and can sinners be so wretchedly infatuate as to suppose, that he, who is of infinite majesty, will sit unconcerned, when so many indignities are daily offered him? Must it not be the height of folly, *thus* to provoke Him, whose power is almighty, whose wrath is unsupportable—From the eye of whose omniscieny no shade can cover the guilty wretch, and from whose omnipotency, no sanctuary can shelter the daring rebel. If the wrath of a king is as the messengers of death, what must the wrath of the King of kings be? Oh what a fearful thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living God—a God, who is a consuming fire to every irreclaimable worker of iniquity!

Again, my soul, how monstrously daring—how full of impious audacity is the profane transgressor? To whom (can he imagine) does the injury redound? Can his rude attempts dethrone the majesty of heaven—can his standing at a defiance drive the OMNIPOTENT to terms of composition? Is it possible to outwit omniscient knowledge; or to outreach the extent of omnipotent power? Can the inconsiderate creature fancy a possibility of hiding himself, from

the notice of an infinite and omnipresent God? If so, all his imaginations are vain, blasphemous and absurd; and altho' divine patience should delay the execution of wrath, for a time; yet, the Lord will at last come—he will come with heavier hands, and severer blows; he will come with legs of *iron*, and thighs of *brass*, to bruise his enemies unto pieces. Sin may prove palatable to the taste, and sweet in the act; but, in the end it will turn bitter as gall, and disagreeable as wormwood. Esau glutted over his mess of pottage inconsiderately. but the loss of his birth-right was a sour pill in his stomach, a poisonous sting in his heart, and a dismal farewell at last: so in whatever gilded features sin may appear to the sinner's eye, at last it will prove a painted harlot; no more salutary than sweetned poison--Oh how vile, how abominably vile is sin, in the sight of a holy God! because of it, and to save his people from the dismal effects thereof, he gave to death--to the cursed, painful, and ignominious death of the cross, his Son--his only begotten Son—his dearly beloved Son. How deep must that leprosy have been, which nothing but the precious blood of the Son of God could cure! say, my soul, are not all thy diseases healed, by the Redeemer's drinking that bitter potion of God's wrath, which thou must otherwise have been drinking thro' the ages of eternity? Yes, yes, it was thy sins that made him sweat water and blood, such drops as never man felt, but himself; to purchase for thee an incorruptible crown, his glorious head was crowned with thorns; for thee, he opened his mouth, and drank the bitter cup which was compounded of vinegar and gall, *bitter* as malice could make it: his sacred hands were nailed to the accursed tree, and his undefiled feet, that never trod the paths of wickedness, were pierced by the cruel iron;
his

his comely countenance, that shone with splendor, unspeakably more radiant than the brilliant beams of the meridian sun, was buffeted and spit upon, to purge away the uncleanness of his people; he was barbarously lashed, that they might escape the direful blows of inflexible justice *; he cried out, *I thirst*, that a fountain of living waters might be opened, to satisfy the desires of his people. He groaned, as one forlorn and forsaken of God, that they might not be abandoned for ever: his body was interred in the silent grave, and he continued under the power of death for a time, that death might not swallow them up, and hell might not be their prison, thro' a long everlasting eternity——And did the pressure of wrath ly so heavy on the Son of God; what a strange infatuation must the sons of men be under, who can make a mock at sin——Did it wring from Christ, sighs, and tears, and blood and the unutterable groans of an afflicted spirit? O ye children of folly, stand—and contemplate what a dreadful deluge of wrath, hath sin brought down, upon the man Christ Jesus.

Say then, O my soul, is not sin the procuring cause of every misery? Neither is it less abominable and provoking in the sight of a holy God, nor less destructive and ruining to sinners, that 'tis become fashionable and epidemic in the world. How tremendous are the judgments, which sin has procured on the children of men! what havock and desolation has been made by this deadly foe, upon kingdoms, countries, cities, and families; and how still more dreadful, that endless ruin, it will at last bring on the impenitent workers of iniquity! O cutting
D 2 thought,

* Canst thou ungrateful man, his torments see,
Nor drop a tear for him, who pour'd his blood for thee?

thought, to be for ever exiled the glorious presence of God in the heavenly mansions, and excluded the society of angels and saints——to be hauled from a life of sin to a death of misery, and hence thrust into the direful regions of eternal and unutterable horror!——

Stay, O my soul, and allow a little more of thy attention this evening, in contemplating the danger and folly of sinners. Upon how precarious a footing do they stand, who are at variance with the great **JEHOVAH**, from the severity of whose wrath, they cannot secure themselves for a moment! while his cup of iniquity is a filling, little knows the heedless creature, how unexpectedly some fit of an apoplexy, some violent fever, or some other of the innumerable instruments of death may dispatch him hence, and resign him into the hands of divine justice. Can he then dispute the point with his Maker? No, the majesty of God will astonish him, his greatness will affright him, his omnipotence will disarm him, and his justice will proceed against him.

AGAIN, how monstrous does sin appear in the sufferings of a bleeding Saviour! sin was the treacherous *Judas* that betray'd him, sin was the *Herod* that mocked him, sin was the *Pilate* that condemned him, sin was the spear that wounded him, and sin were the nails that pierced him.

Get up then, O Christless souls, and flee for your lives, from the hands of this cruel tormentor——flee to the blood of **JESUS**, 'ere sin drag you to the fatal place of execution, from whence there is no returning to pour out tears of evangelical repentance.——Yes, yes, the seared conscience that now slumbers in the bosom of sin, will at length be aroused; the great God will at last command his deputy to awaken, and put the sinner to the extremity of war; and then alas, how will the alarmed

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conscience rage like a roaring lion, and tear like a bloody mastiff.

The guilty wretch may have a seeming truce with conscience, for a while; but solid peace he cannot enjoy; and while conscience slumbers, his debt is never paid, nor extenuate; but greater arrears always run on: like a pile of fire under green wood, the seared conscience may continue long quiet, but at last the flame will be kindled, not easie to be extinguished. In vain *then* will he strive to feast away cares, to sleep away gnawing thoughts, or to drink away sorrows, while the alarmed enemy lodges within. Conscience, once thoroughly aroused, will not readily leave the forlorn creature, before it discover to his eye, the dreadful wrath of an angry God, ready to seize him, and the pit smoaking with everlasting flames, where he must take up a perpetual residence, if he finds no shelter under the covert of a mediator's blood. *

Well, my soul, is it not thy duty—is it not thy interest, to fly from every appearance of evil; and to consider of sin, as the worst of adversaries thou hast to overcome? Was I apprized *this night* of a man's approach to my family, who intended our total ruin, and had committed the most unheard of and barbarous villainies, wherever he went; who had betrayed *one*, poisoned *another*, and stabbed a *third*; would not parents, and children, and servants all join their efforts against him! Yea surely. Why then, *sin* is the traitor—the cruel traitor thou must incessantly withstand, till a compleat

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vic-

- * Stop, thoughtless wanderer, stop and look around,
 'Tis all, on which thou tread'st, enchanted ground!
 Wake, wake, and see thy fate! but one step more,
 And ah! thou'rt lost beyond redeeming power!

Spiritual Life.

victory is obtained, over the detestable foe. Say not, O my soul,—Say not of any darling favourite; *this is but a little sin, and I may make parley with it.* There is no sin, however little it may appear in the eye of men, but merits everlasting destruction, both of soul, and body *. Every sin is a transgression of the divine law, and therefore makes the sinner liable to the curse: *for the wages of sin is death.* True, sins are, and may be distinguished into sins of a more or less heinous nature: and Christ upbraids the Pharisees, with making their disciples twofold more the children of the devil than themselves †. But the *Papistical* distinction between sins *venial*, and sins *mortal*, alledging the first punishable by the imaginary flames of purgatory, and the last only by an eternity of torment, is like the strange woman which *Solomon* speaks of, *whose lips drop as an honey comb, and are smoother than oil, but the end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword* §. Again, many little sins (as the world may call them) heaped together, will soon reach to a mountain of guilt; as small drops of

* The Lord hath said that he will by no means clear the guilty, *Exod. xxxiv. 7.* And his justice requires that the punishment should bear proportion to the crime; and therefore inflicts as much as is consistent with the creature's being; what is wanting in degrees, is made up in duration — The least sin cannot be expiated without infinite satisfaction; and nothing can satisfy God for the injury of the least sin, but that which is infinite; (*i. e.*) such as no creature, no man, no angel, can tender to him; no, nor all the creatures together, by all that they can do or suffer while the world endures. — *Without blood there is no remission*, *Heb. ix. 22.* If all the creatures on earth; if all the glorious saints in heaven, if all the glorious angels in the presence of God, should offer to sacrifice their lives, for the expiation of one sin; it would not be accepted, it could not be sufficient: for their lives, being finite creatures, are but of a finite value. Only the blood of him, who being God, derives an infinite value upon his blood.

See *Clarkson's Sermons Fol.*

† *Matth. xxiii. 15.*

§ *Prov. v. 3.*

of rain, in process of time, fill up channels, make the floods to swell, and the overcharged rivers to vomit forth their superfluous waters, over the ascending banks. And what jeopardy follows, by the inundation arising from these small drops, experience has sufficiently demonstrated. The smiling meadows are polluted—the fertile fields spoiled of their rich product—Herds of cattle drowned—while houses, cities, and inhabitants are endangered and damaged, under the deluge of prevailing waters.

Says an antient father, *Apace is but a small piece of ground, but many paces will make a mile, and many miles will bring to hell at last.* And 'tis much a piece, in the issue, whether a sinner is immediately knocked down, by one *Goliath*, or a thousand *Philistines*—As every bird brings sufficient materials to make its own nest, so every reprobate brings as many sins, as will suffice to make up his own funeral pile, in the bottomless pit. Get up then, my soul, exert all thy might, and fight under the banners of grace, against the deadly foe. It was an expression that proceeded from the mouth of one, whom the Lord brought from a herd of persecutors, to be enrolled among the company of apostles, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners: of whom I am the chief.* * 1 Tim. i. 15. Of whom I am the chief! yes, the inspired Paul said so of

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him.

* Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ πάνσο ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιον, ὅτι Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἀμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι, ὃν πρῶτος ἐμὶ ἐγώ——

Some Jewish writers entertained an egregiously gross fancy, from what the apostle speaks here of himself, ὃν πρῶτος ἐμὶ ἐγώ, viz. *That the soul of the first Adam was in Paul's body.*—A transmigration of souls from one body to another is monstrously absurd, and repugnant to that express text of scripture, Matth. xvi. *What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* Every man has a soul

himself: and may I be allowed here, to invite the saints, to come and learn a lesson of self-denial. Oh how little ground have they to be vainly puffed up, with their own excellency! 'tis the character of the king's daughter, *that she is all glorious within*, Psalm xlv. And indeed it is inward beauty, and not the external shew, which God delights in. He does not so much regard the vain ostentation of a proud Pharisee, as the contrite heart of an humble Publican; he countenances *Elijah* and *Peter* with their mantles, as much as *Aaron* with his mitre: an external profession, without grace in the heart, is, in God's sight, as a whited wall, or a painted sepulchre——which is loathsome and abominable, where there is nothing but rottenness and putrefaction within.

Bring in, O my soul, bring in a parallel induction of every creature, in the universe, and I shall have ground to stage myself before God, **THE CHIEF OF SINNERS**——Raise thy thoughts, and contemplate the inhabitants of the higher spheres. Say, are not the glorious angels all ministring spirits, constantly attending on the will of their Creator, and waiting ready to perform his pleasure? *Bless the Lord ye his*

a soul of his own: and, as the body at death returns to dust, so the spirit returnsto God that gave it.—Paul acknowledges himself a sinner, *who yet obtained mercy of the Lord*——he says not *I was*, but *I am*, the chief of sinners. Our self-denied apostle gives an open and true confession; and so every child of God ought to be ready to do——speaking of his worth, he acknowledges himself *the least of all the apostles*, 1 Cor. i. 15; Yea, *the least of all saints*, Eph. iii. 4; But speaking of his own wants, he *here* classes himself among the chief of those sinners, whom Christ came to save——But to infer from the apostle's words (as *even* some modern Rabbins have done) that the souls of men and women, after death, go into other bodies——that the soul of *Moses* was the same with that of *Abel*——that the soul of *Adam* was the same with that of *Paul*——is most ridiculous and anti-scriptural.

his angels that excel (Heb. are mighty †) in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. How prompt are the angelical tribes to minister unto them, who shall be heirs of salvation. And, with what transports of joy are all the glorified saints singing, *Hallelujah, salvation, honour and power to God, and to the Lamb that sits upon the throne for evermore!* But ah, compared with these, how faint are the efforts of the greatest saint, in this sublunary world, where imperfection universally obtains!

Descend a little lower; and see, how hail and snow, rain and thunder, lightning, winds and storms do all fulfill the sovereign will of heaven; each of them in their own kind, transcending man, in answering the respective ends of their creation! how does the sun go forth as a giant, rejoicing as a mighty man, to run his course! according to the ordinance of God, the sun doth rule by day, and the moon by night, *Gen. i. 16.* Thus, *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy-work* §. And altho' these splendid luminaries want understanding, and are dumb, yet they trumpet forth the praises of their Maker; there is neither speech nor language among them, and yet their voice is heard in every region——Yea if the Lord give orders, they fight at his command, *They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.* *Jud. v. 20.*

When Joshua warred against the Amorites, God
no

ברבו יהוה מלאכיו גברי כח עשי רכרו לשמע
‡ *Psal. ciii. 20.*
בקול רכרו

Some (and if I rightly remember Dr. Hammond) translate the words thus — *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that do his commandments at hearing [or as soon as they hear the voice of his word.]*

§ *Psal. xix. 1.* There is a peculiar emphasis in the original הרקיע *Illud expansum.*

no sooner issued out his command, than the sun, and the moon obeyed, and altered their ordinary course, *The sun stood still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Asbelon, until the people of God had avenged themselves on their enemies*——But, while the inanimate creatures, above us, are thus obsequious to the author of their existence, how prone is the heart of man continually to rebel against him ! Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him ; or the son of man, that thou visitest him. Draw thy contemplations downward, O my soul, and view the lower creation ; how it also obtemperates the appointment of heaven. The manured ground brings forth increase, for the use of them, by whom it is cultivated : but alas, the Lord complains, that his inclosed vineyard *Israel* yields nothing but wild grapes, briers and thorns. *He looked for judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteousness, but behold a cry* *. The lifeless rocks rent asunder, at our Saviour's crucifixion ; when the heart of man had no sympathy, no bowels of compassion. The irrational brutes, and all the feathered choir ; yea, the fiery dragons and silly reptiles, after their own kind, serve the appointment of their Maker : the stork knows her appointed season, the turtle and the swallow observe the time of their coming ; the dull ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Jehovah utters the complaint, *Israel doth not know, my people doth not understand*. Again, my soul, am I not, by nature, as black and ugly as sin can possibly make me ; and must not my situation have been extremely and eternally miserable by sin, if free grace and unmerited love had not prevented ? Oh how am I then obliged to God's infinite mercy——mercy, which alas I have even abu-

* Isaiah v. 7.

abused, times and ways without number! the apostate angels are not capable of rejecting Christ, for he never was, nor ever will be offered to them; but ah, how often have I refused to open, when he knocked! the devil sinned, before the wages of sin was known; † but have not I sinned, after repeated assurances were given me, that the wages of sin is death? *Rom. vi.* Satan is hardened against God, as a judge that punisheth, and hath long since condemned him; but how often have I sinned, against a God, who hath compassed me about with mercy, on every side—who has often addressed me, in such compassionate language as this, *Return, O backslider, why wilt thou perish, in thine iniquity? How often would I have gathered Israel as a hen gathereth her chickens, under her wings! Turn ye, at my reproof; open, and I will enter in.*

Hide thy face, O Lord, from my sin, and blot out all mine iniquity, was the prayer of a royal penitent. Oh, that many souls were sending up the like cry, before the throne of God! his power is not weakened, his arm is not shortned, his mercy is not exhausted; no, he is the same *yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Up then, O my soul, and cast thy burden on the Lord—flee by faith, to that precious blood of a slain Lamb, which washeth away sin and uncleanness—Do thou, O Lord, *purge me with hyssop,*

† Pride was the ruin of the diabolical herd; and the opinion pretty universally prevails, that Satan's delinquency, for which he was exiled the heavenly mansions, was but ONE; and that not acted, but plotted, and contrived; upon which

—Him the almighty power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition: there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire.

Milton.

sepe, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow.

MEDITATION V.

On the amazing Miracles at our Saviour's Crucifixion.

IS it not, my soul, is it not matter of everlasting admiration, to think, how low the eternal Son of God did stoop, to save sinners? Yes, beyond all peradventure; and yet, in the lowest depth of his humiliation, God the father never left him, without some evident demonstration, some eminent testimony of his divine power. A memorable instance of this we have recorded, at our Lord's crucifixion; when he was presented in the most amazing posture, hanging on the cross, betwixt a couple of malefactors, and his merciless enemies insulting over him, when expiring in unutterable agony: Yea, when the wrath of God, the fury of men, and the rage of devils were all levelled against him; under these unheard-of indignities, and the eclipses of his father's love, his divinity still appeared, and, like a glorious sun, breaks the dismal clouds of misery, to discover him more than meer man—The miracles at our Lord's crucifixion are ushered in, by the evangelist, *Matth. xxvii. 51.* with a **BEHOLD**———Be it thy enquiry, O my soul, *now* to view these amazing displays of divine power, at the death of a divine Saviour.

The vail of the temple was rent in twain from the
top

top to the bottom *. It is by some vainly alledged, against this being considered of as a miracle, that the substance of this *vail* was thin, and might without a miracle, by an easie force, be broke; but Christ was now dead, or dying, at the same instant; and it must be above the power of nature, that a dying, or dead man, crucified at such a distance, should *rent the veil*, within the temple. In order to take a more particular survey of this miracle, it may be of use to make some short enquiry about the temple itself--During the time, in which the Jews sojourned in the wilderness, God commanded an ambulatory tabernacle to be framed, fit to be carried at their removal; he ordered the Priests and Levites to attend it, and inspired the architects with a spirit of surprising art, to make all things necessary for beautifying and adorning it, according to the pattern which God had shown to Moses, in the mount; and, by the pillar of cloud standing or removing above it, the chosen army was to proceed on their march, or to pitch their tents; and this was appointed to be the place, where the tribes or thousands of Israel were to resort,
for

* In the *second* temple, between the *holy place* and the *most holy* (says Maimonides) there was no *partition wall*, tho' in the *first* temple there was one built of the thickness of a cubit. The division between them was made by two *veils*, one from the extremity of the *holy place*, and the other from the extremity of the *most holy*, with a void space of a cubit between. The like form of *separation* was observed in the temple, which Herod rebuilt, as Josephus informs us; (de bello Jud. lib. vi. chap. 14.) and therefore it must be a mistake in those who think, that this *veil* was a partition wall of stones. Whether of the two *veils*, that which belonged to the *holy place*, or that which hung in the *most holy*, was, at this time, rent in twain, is a question among the ancients, tho' the words of the Author to the Hebrews, where he tells us, that Christ as our high priest, has consecrated for us a new way, thro' the *veil*, so that we may with boldness enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Heb. x. 19. &c. seems to be a pretty clear demonstration of it.

See Stackhouse's *hist. of the Bible*.

for public worship; where also was repositied Moses's rod, the table of the law, etc. but when they were settled in the land of Canaan, God made choice of Jerusalem, for the place of their public worship. Thus, as some great princes have their palaces within a city, so JEHOVAH had his temple within *Jerusalem*; as palaces are distinguished with different courts, so was the temple; and as these are furnished with tables, so here had the Lord his altar.—

The temple was divided into three parts; one of which was called the Holy of holys, and the high priest, who was a type of Christ, must needs sanctify himself, before he could enter into it, which was but once a year: The holy place was another place of the temple, where the priests trimmed, and lighted the lamps, cleansed the altar, prepared the table for the shew-bread, and offered incense. There stood also before the temple these remarkable pillars. JACHIN and BOAZ, *i. e.* † Stability and strength, which signified the indurance of that spiritual temple the CHURCH, against which the gates of hell can never prevail. The outer part of the temple was the court of the people, and that of the Gentiles, where the prosylites stood, when they were convicted; and this was the farthest distance of the whole, from the Holy of holys: here the publican stood afar off *Luke xviii.* and from this place Christ drove out the buyers and sellers*. This court of the Gentiles was to be left out and not measured, *Rev. xi.* Pointing, as it were, that this court could not contain the multitudes of them that were to be called. Again, there were two temples; the first was

† 1 Kings vii. 20.

2 Chron. iii. 17.

* For a more minute description and view of this temple, the reader, may consult, (among others) *Lamy's apparatus Biblicus*, translated from the *French* by R. Bundy.

was ruined at the *Babylonish* captivity, the second destroyed by *Titus*, about forty years after our Lord's crucifixion. The glory of the first temple far exceeded that of the second, for material beauty *; but, in reality, the glory of the second, by much surpassed that of the first, *Hag. ii. 9.* Instead of gold in the first, was CHRIST, in whom are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom, in the second; instead of hewn and polished stones in the first, was JESUS, a living stone, in the second; the glory

* The glory of *Solomon's* temple was not in the temple itself, much less in the bigness of it — The main grandeur and excellency of it consisted *1st.* In its ornaments, its workmanship being every where exceeding curious, and its overlayings vast and prodigious. For the overlayings of the Holy of holys only, which was a room of thirty foot square, and thirty foot high, amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pound of our sterling money. *2dly.* In its materials. For *Solomon's* temple was all built of new large stones, hewn out in the most curious and artful manner, whereas the second temple was mostly built of such stones only, as they dug up out of the ruins of the former, *3dly.* In its out-buildings. For the court, in which the temple stood, and that without it called the court of the women, were built round with stately buildings, and cloysters; and the gates entering thereunto were very beautiful and sumptuous. And the outer court, which was a large square encompassing all the rest of 750 foot on every side, was surrounded with a most stately and magnificent cloyster, sustained by three rows of pillars on three sides of it, and by four on the fourth. — And there could be no such ornaments or materials in the new temple, as there were in the former. In process of time indeed all the out buildings were restored, and such ornaments, and materials were added on *Herod's* repairing of it, that the second temple after that came little short herein of the former. And there are some who will say, that it exceeded it. But still what was the main glory of the first temple, those extraordinary marks of the divine favour, with which it was honoured, were wholly wanting in the second. The *Jews* reckon them up in these five particulars, 1. The ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, which was upon it; 2. The *Shecinab*, or divine presence. 3. The *Urim* and *Thummim*, 4. The holy fire upon the altar, 5. The spirit of prophecy.

Prideaux's Connections;

glory of the first temple left it, but the second the Lord hath promised to continue, till the end of time. In the first temple was holy oil, but in the second was CHRIST, whom the Lord anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

Having thus taken a short survey of the temple; next enquire, O my soul, what is signified by the *vail* rent—The vail was a partition betwixt the holy of holys, and the holy place; the renting of which fulfilled Christ's dying words—*It is finished*. Then was an end put to all the ceremonies and sacrifices under the law; and now under the new Testament, we have one only real and royal sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ to look unto. And indeed he was the blessed object, to which all the legal rites and sacrifices pointed; so that now *ceremoniamortua lex mortifera*. The gospel once lay hid, under the law; and the law is now compleated in the gospel. Gal. iv. 9: *Now you have known God, in the gospel, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage*——This vail rent at our Saviour's crucifixion, and thereby gave a witnessing evidence, that all ritual obligations were cancelled. Col. ii. *Christ blotted out the hand writing of ordinances, that was against us, and nailed it to the cross*. All the typical and prefiguring ceremonies are abolished; yet decency and order is to be still continued in the Christian church. But, under the gospel dispensation, external institutions, in divine service, are few in number, and plain in signification; far from ostentation, and farther from superstition. Be it therefore thy care, my soul, to avoid these synagogues, where an intolerable burden of external rites exiles the simplicity of spiritual devotion. No, the church must not flout as an harlot, but be gravely attired as becometh Christ's spouse. The Holy of holys signified the third heavens——
where

--where God manifests himself in majesty to his saints; and, as the temple had three courts, so there is a three-fold heaven mentioned in scripture, *viz.* The *elementary*, wherein are clouds, rain, wind, and dew; thus, birds are called the birds of heaven. Next, the *starry* heaven; thus the sun is said *to go from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the end thereof* *. Lastly, the heaven of heavens, the habitation of God himself, which was typified by the *sanctum sanctorum*: so that the vail of the temple signified the flesh of Christ, and the renting of that vail, the crucifixion of Christ; by which, access is made into the holy of holys. We have *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, thro' the vail, that is to say, his flesh.* Heaven's gates were shut by our sins, and there is no passage for us to enter, but through the merits of our highest and holiest high-priest. Yes, O my soul, JESUS hath rent the vail, he gave his body to be torn, by *death*, that he might make way for his people to enter into eternal life—When this vail was rent, the holiest place and the temple became, as it were all one; by which was represented the ONE New Testament-Church, which was to be made up of both Jews

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and

* If we should take these expressions in a philosophical, strict, literal sense, and not as vulgar expressions, arising from the appearance of things; we shall find that very odd and unreasonable conclusions may as well be collected from these scriptures, as the sun's motion: as that the sun hath animal life, motion, and desire, being said to act these things itself, to rise, to set, yea to *haste to the place* of his rising, or as the *Hebrew* hath it, to *pant after* or *eagerly to desire* it. So in *Psa.* xix. the elegant Psalmist giving a poetical description of this noble and admirable work of God, the *sun*, saith, God hath, in the heavens, *made a tabernacle for him*; as if the sun had an house, a resting-place provided for him; from which he comes daily forth with beauty and lustre, as resplendent as that of a bridegroom, and with the same ardency, joy and diligence runs his course, as a champion does his race.

Derham,

and Gentiles, *Eph. ii. 14. He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition betwixt us.* So that now, these, whom the *Jews* esteemed dogs, eat of the children's bread; nay, they are become true children; and *Japhet* is persuaded to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, *Gen. ix. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, Gal. vi. 15.* The sun of the gospel is not confined, to enlighten *Judea* only; but extends his radiant beams, over distant nations; and (blessed be God) has, long since, reached the *British* isles †. The sons of *Hagar* are now adopted among the children of God, as well as the sons of *Sarah*; and *Jerusalem* is the mother of all them that believe—Nor may it be extravagant to imagine, that, by the renting of this vail was both threatned and signified, the subversion and overthrow of the whole temple, and the *Jews* themselves also. If he spare not the holy of holys, how much less can the rest think to escape? When the Lord *JEHOVAH* commanded to *slay all, both old and young, maids and children,* he adds, *Ezek. ix. And begin at my sanctuary.* If God's sanctuary, when profaned and polluted, escape not ruin; how much less shall houses, courts, or palaces, that are built for riot, pride, and ambition stand? *Jer. xxv. For lo, I begin to bring*
evil

† O *Britain*, praise thy mighty God,
And make his honours known abroad;
He bid the ocean round thee flow:
Not bars of brass could guard thee so.
—— But he hath nobler works and ways
To call the *Britons* to his praise.
To all the isles his laws are shown;
His gospel through the nation known;
He hath not thus reveal'd his word
To every land: Praise ye the Lord.

Watts.

evil on the city, that is called by name; and shall ye go unpunished, saith God to the heathen? 1 Pet. iv. 17. If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them, that obey not the gospel?—This temple was one of the great wonders of the world, as curious a piece of workmanship, as the labour of many years could make it. Nothing of the most exquisite human skill was a-wanting to ornament it; yea, and the blessing of heaven was added unto it: yet, that splendid fabrick was brought to ruin, at last, by sin; yea its very ruins are perished——God punished by degrees, first in renting the *vail*, and then in destroying the *temple*. As, by the hand of David, he first rent *Saul's* garments, and then rent from him the kingdom; so the Lord, ordinarily, first touches the temple of sinners' bodies, by want, sickness, and the like; but, if these bring them not to repentance, he rents asunder, in his wrath, the soul and the body; and so destroys the whole man——Thus the Jews used to rent their garments, when they heard of any abomination committed, or blasphemy uttered against the great God ‡; so (may I be allowed the expression) the *temple* tore its garments, and rent asunder its vail, when such execrable blasphemies were uttered, and such a horrid murder committed upon the innocent, and spotless *Lamb*, stretched on the tree.

The earth did quake—another amazing display of divine power! for earthquakes, *Naturalists* have assigned

E 2

‡ Thus Ezra chap. ix. 3. when he heard of the abominations of Israel, *rent his garment, and his mantle*; not only, as a token of his own grief; but also, as expressive of his sense of the Lord's anger—And as an higher evidence of his excessive sorrow, he *pluckt off the hair of his head and of his beard*—A custom that seems also to have been in use, among *Heathens*, in their bitter lamentations; thus when *Ulysses*, and his companions bewailed the death of *Elpenor*.

Εξομνιοὶ δὲ ἐν ταύθᾳ γούνη τὶλλον τοὶ τε χαίτας.

Homer.

assigned different causes; as, that of hot and dry exhalations, shut up in the bowels of the earth, and labouring for vent; when the resistance, made by the solidity thereof, causeth the motion §.—However that may be, this earthquake arose, not from a natural, but

§ A few months ago, we have had the most awful accounts of the effects of earthquakes, especially in *Africa* and *Europe* — The dreadful devastation made in *Lisbon* the metropolis of *Portugal*, on the first of November last, is such, as cannot easily be conceived of, much less, described, with all the horror of that day. Different countries have brought forth very awful and astonishing accounts of earthquakes in different places of the world. The records of antiquity inform us, That almost two thirds of *Sidon* was swallowed up by an earthquake, which also extended to some of the *Cyclades* islands, and *Euboea*, where the fountains of *Arethusa* and *Chaleis*, were stopped up by it, and after many days brought forth again, at another source — *Democles* mentions huge earthquakes, of old, in *Lydia* and *Ionia*, by which many villages were swallowed up — A writer who relates those earthquakes that happened in *Greece*, says, that when *Scarphia* was demolished from the very foundation, seventeen hundred persons were overwhelmed in its ruins — *Pliny* tells us of a most terrible earthquake that happened in the reign of *Tiberius Caesar*, wherein twelve cities in *Asia* were prostrated in one night — And if these accounts are genuine, which bear *Augustin's* name, no less than an hundred cities in *Lybia* were demolished by an earthquake — The city of *Antioch* was almost swallowed up, by an earthquake, in *Trajan's* time — And the same city was again overwhelmed in *Justinian's* time *Anno D. 518*, and buried in its ruins upwards of forty thousand of the citizens; and 61 years after the last mentioned earthquake, it was again shaken and lost sixty thousand of its inhabitants — In the Emperor *Adrian's* time, many cities in *Palestina* were thrown down; and many also were destroyed, *Anno. 1182*. — We have also such awful accounts, of earthquakes, in latter times — *Anno 1619*. There was a dreadful earthquake in *Appulia*, by which seventeen thousand inhabitants perished — In *Calabria*, a most dismal earthquake happened, *Anno 1638*. — Of a still later date, a famous city of *Ragusa* was wholly subverted by a terrible earthquake; and a most dreadful earthquake happened, in the island of *Jamaica*; *Anno 1692*. the particulars of which are most shocking and affecting — And (says a learned Author) that the cause of earthquakes is the same with that of thunder, I doubt not, and most learned men are agreed; that is, exhalations or steams set fire, the one in the clouds, and the other in the caverns of the earth; which is sufficiently proved from the great deflagrations

and

but a supernatural cause; at the very instant of the Redeemer's death †.—Nor was this miracle without its proper use; hereby the globe of this earth attempts, as it were, to convince its inhabitants; and starts, in a fit of trembling, at such a shocking, and unheard-of act; as, the crucifixion of the Son of God. The earth cannot stand as the theatre, upon which the dreadful scene is acted, without discovering some pangs of horror—— Hereby, *also*, the glory of the New Testament is displayed, and vindicated, from inferiority to the old. When the law was given to *Moses* on mount Sinai, *Exod. xix.* *The whole mount quaked*; and when *Elijah* stood upon mount *Horeb*, there passed by a strong wind, and after the wind, an earthquake, *1 Kings ix.* So when the Lord of the gospel expired, the earth did quake, that *the ministration of righteousness, might be no less glorious, than the ministration of death, 2 Cor. iii.*

E 3

The

and eruptions of *Vulcanos* or burning mountains; they being always either preceded or attended by earthquakes—But now of what nature this steam is, that is thus inflamed, and what causes the accension, I must confess myself not to be fully satisfied. That it is at least partly sulphurous is certain, and well observed by *Dr. Lister*, from the sulphurous stink of waters smelt before, and of the very air itself after them: that it conceives fire of itself, and is not kindled after the manner of gun-powder by the touch of fire, is as clear, there being no fire preexisting in the clouds; but how it should kindle, unless by a colluctation of parts after the manner of fermentations, I cannot conceive. And if so, then the steam must be a dissimilar body composed of parts of different natures; else would there be no colluctation, and consequently no accension, the parts friendly conspiring and agreeing in the same motion.

Ray.

† 'Tis said of *Dionysius the Areopagite*, that when he was in *Egypt* prosecuting his studies, under *Appolophanes*, upon seeing the eclipse of the sun, at our Saviour's crucifixion, contrary to the discoveries of nature; he cry'd out, *Aut Deus naturas patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur.*——*Either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world will be dissolved.*

The rocks rent—By this, no doubt, was signified, that remarkable power, and wonderful efficacy, with which the gospel should be accompanied. As at the death and passion of Christ, these solid substances clave asunder: so, the publication of Christ's death, in the gospel, is made by the power of God, to penetrate into, and break in pieces, as it were, the hard and rocky hearts of men. Hence the words of *John* the baptist, Matth. iii. *God is able, of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.* The heart of *Zaccheus*, *Mary Magdalene*, *Paul* and others were as so many impregnable rocks; and yet, how easily were they broke asunder, by the preaching of the glorious gospel, accompanied with divine power—To what hard substances, is the heart of man compared? 'Tis hard, as the nether *millstone*, and as the *adamant* itself; yet, this rod, like that of *Moses*, is able to break the hardest of rocks, and make them gush out floods of evangelical tears: it is like *Jeremiah's* hammer, powerful to bruise the most obdurate heart; as the blood of a goat is said to be capable to dissolve adamant; so the blood of Christ is actually powerful enough to melt the rocky heart of a sinner. Oh, thrice happy they, whose hearts are thus broken for *him*, whose heart was broken for us! yes, my soul, *he was bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our sins*; and thou art infallibly assured from his holy word, that *a broken and a contrite heart* is a sacrifice *he will not despise* † Psal. li.——When the earth *quaked*, and the rocks *rent*,

† The Lord is pleased to accept the sacrifice of a heart, broken and contrite for sin; and 'tis his own work to prepare and provide this sacrifice: as the sacrifices under the law were bound, and bled, and burnt; so he binds the contrite heart with conviction, makes it bleed in contrition, and it burns with a holy indignation against sin; but the Lord Jesus Christ is the *one and only* sacrifice of atonement—the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world; by the shedding of
whole

rent, at the cruel death of thy *Saviour*; yet, my soul, how shocking to think, that, the awful sight neither melted, nor moved the hearts of many of the miserable actors and spectators! ah, the hardness and stupidity of a wicked heart! *rocks* are sooner broken, than *these* are mollified. The most stubborn creature is flexible to some agent; flints to rain, iron to fire, and stones to the hammer. Ay, but nothing, without the power of irresistible grace, can make the sinner's heart to yield; neither the showers of mercy, the lashes of reproof, nor the fire of judgment; no, like the anvil, they turn frequently the harder, by long beating—Thus, the plagues of *Egypt* could not soften the heart of *Pharaoh*: and, alas, were it not easier to move the walls of churches, than the hearts of many hearers? Because of the hardness of the Jews' hearts, their beautiful city, their glorious temple, was turned to a heap of rubbish. And, how many Christian churches, once famous, both for the purity and plenty of gospel ordinances, has the Lord been provoked to punish, by a removal of his candlestick, from among them!

The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose. They arose as so many witnesses of their Saviour's resurrection; and they even became sharers of it also; but none of these dead bodies awoke, until Christ himself first rose; for *he was the first fruits of them that slept.* It is not thy present business, O my soul, to pry into the different questions of curiosity that have been started, from this miracle, *such as*, who of the saints it was, that arose; whether the antient patriarchs and prophets, or these believers, who had but died *lately*

E 4

be-

whose precious blood, justice is satisfied, the law magnified and made honourable, and redemption from sin and wrath is obtained to all them, who take shelter under the covert of this redeeming blood.

before their Saviour's crucifixion, such as old *Si-
meon* † etc. Neither is it correspondent with thy
design, *now*, to examine all the particular niceties
which respect the continuance of these saints, upon
earth after this resurrection. 'Tis sufficiently evi-
dent, that their souls were, by a divine dispensation
thus *early* re-united to their bodies, to manifest the
power and Deity of JESUS CHRIST: and by the same
likely-hood, they died no more, but waited upon
earth, until Christ's ascension, and *then* attended
him to heaven—But beware, my soul, and venture
not too forwardly to determine, in things not
clearly revealed—'tis wisdom not to pretend to be
wise, above what is written or revealed.—Many
things are, by a God of infinite wisdom, concealed;
and, therefore, must neither be keenly disputed,
nor curiously searched after.

And, *was the vail of the temple rent in twain*, at
our Lord's crucifixion? How dangerous does it ap-
pear to be, from the example of the blinded *Jews*,
to provoke a holy God, as they did; and for which,
both they, and their temple were destroyed? Oh,
that sinners would stop in their career; lest the
Lord *also* destroy us, and our temple, by removing
the candlestick of his word, and ordinances from us;
lest

† It seems pretty evident, from the apostle's words, 1 Cor. xv.
20. and Col. i. 18. that altho' the graves were opened at our Sa-
viour's death, yet none of the dead bodies arose until *Christ's* resur-
rection; and who of the saints then arose is not clearly determined
by the inspired writers. The apostles *Peter* and *Paul* seem to re-
fute the opinion of those, who imagined that *David* and some of the
ancient *Patriarchs* had now arisen, Acts ii. 29. Heb. xi. 39, 40.
Perhaps, some of Christ's disciples, who had dyed *lately* before his
crucifixion, were now raised up; this appears the more probable, from
the account we have of *their going to the holy city, and there appearing
to many*, to whom them they were probably well known—But *Tu-
tum est nescire quod legitur.*

lest, he cause the land to *spue us out*, for our iniquities, make us vagabonds through the earth; or send a famine upon us, as he threatned his ancient *Israel*, not of bread nor of water, but of the word of the Lord — *Pause here*, a little, my soul, and send up thy fervent intreaties to a God of grace; that he would remove the vail of ignorance from our modern *Jews*; and that he would convince them, that the *Messias* is already come, and that it is in vain to look for another †.

How comfortable these evangelical tidings to believers, *that the vail is rent!* for so an entrance is ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. 2 Pet. i. 12. But, unto unbelievers and hypocrites, to worldly wolves, and luxurious goats, the vail is still up, and the gates of heaven stand shut. As *Adam* was kept out of paradise, by cherubims, with flaming swords; so will the impenitent unbeliever find heaven guarded against him, by the awful sword of divine justice.

Again, my soul, what free access is now made, for prayers and supplications, offered up in faith, before the throne of God! The vail of separation, is rent asunder by Christ; and a clear way is made for an approach to the holy of holys. Our slain Redeemer hath tore away the vail, and opened a patent way for our petitions to be presented before the mercy seat of heaven. *Having such an priest*
over

† 'Tis said of the modern *Jews*, that when they pray, they turn their faces towards *Jerusalem*, to this day, and so remarkable is their delusion, that many of them, upon seeing a house new-built, are said to mark the white wall with a black stiek (*nigrum super album*) signifying their sorrow, because *Jerusalem* is not built, as that new wall; and under this they write, *Lord, remember the desolation of Jerusalem, and have pity upon it.*

over the house of God, let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Heb. x.—How far do the glorious privileges of believers, under the *New*, transcend those of the Jews, under the *old* Testament dispensation! they were as servants under a burden of legal ceremonies, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear; we are freed from that ceremonial yoke, and, as children, may cry, ABBA father †. They had their priests, after the order of Aaron, continuing but for a time; we have Jesus Christ, to continue our great high priest, for ever, after

† The word *Father* is used homonymous, and may be taken in various acceptations, as, (1.) For a natural parent, of whom we have our being. (2.) For a civil parent, as kings, magistrates and all in lawful authority over us are. (3.) For ecclesiastical fathers, such as the ministers of the gospel, by whom, as the instruments of God's work, the life of godliness is begotten in our souls. 1 Cor. iv. xv. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for, in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel.* And, in this triple sense, God may be said to be our father—*natural*, by creation——*civil*, by providential sustentation——*Spiritual* or *ecclesiastical*, by adoption.

Since the beginning, God hath been giving clearer and clearer evidences to his people, of the paternal regard and affection he bare towards them; and the nearer to the fulness of time, the brighter marks of his fatherly love have been manifested——He was pointed out the *father* of the first Adam; of Abraham, and Moses, under names, that were expressive of much love and affection. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent his own Son, made of a woman made under the law; to him he is made known by the name of a *father*; and in him he is become *ours*; he is *his* by nature, and *ours* by adoption; John i. 12. *But as many as receiv'd him, to them gave he power, to become the sons of God——*To them he gave the right or privilege οσοι δε ελαβον αυτον, εδωκεν αυτοις εξουσιαν τεκνα Θεου γινεσθαι, τοις πιστευουσιν εις το ονομα αυτου.

This affectionate title may influence the children of God, with great comfort and encouragement, in prayer. It is not a strange or severe judge, but a loving and compassionate *father*, before whom they approach. And what will the yearning bowels of a tender-hearted parent, refuse a supplicating child? Nothing that's for its real good and advantage. *Let us therefore, says an apostle, come boldly to the throne of Grace.*

after the order of *Melchizedec*. And, if it is a singular privilege for rebels to have admittance with their petitions, to an earthly king; how much more glorious the believer's privilege, whose very desires are heard, before the throne of heaven; and who have a powerful advocate, at the king's right hand, perpetually pleading their cause? Yet, remember O my soul—remember that awful saying, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me* †! No, if the priests and servants of Baal cry ever so loudly, all will be to no purpose; even so, the standing vail, like a thick cloud, reverberates and beats back the prayers of the wicked. A clear conscience hath a clear voice, in God's ears; and true faith makes a fair passage, within the gates of heaven.

And have the Jews lost their favourite temple? what a convincing evidence mayest thou thence fetch in, O my soul, that a continuance in sin, will not fail to deprive a people of their greatest privileges? The temple was the Jews' great glory; and, frequently

† Psalm lxvi. 18.

The Jewish writers, some of them that have the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy, put a very corrupt gloss upon these words; *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, that is, say they, If I allow myself only in heart sins, and iniquity doth not break out in my words and actions, *God will not hear me*, i. e. he will not be offended with me, he will take no notice of it, so as to lay it to my charge, as if heart sins were no sins in God's account; the fallhood of this our Saviour has shown in his spiritual exposition of the laws. *Matth. v.* But the sense of this place is plain; *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, i. e. If I have favourable thoughts of it, if I love it, indulge it, and allow myself in it; If I treat it as a friend, and bid it welcome, make provision for it, and am loath to part with it, if I roll it under my tongue as a sweet morsel, tho' it be but a *heart-sin* that is thus countenanced and made much of, if I delight in it after the inward man, *God will not hear* my prayer, will not accept it, or be pleas'd with it, nor can I expect an answer of peace to it.

Henry.

ly, they were wont to cry out, with a transporting kind of joy, *The temple of the Lord; the temple of the Lord.* Yet, even this favourite temple of theirs, screens them not from vengeance; for God's own hand rent the vail afunder, and afterwards gave the whole fabrick as a spoil to the Gentiles; by which was fulfilled the direful threatning, Mal. ii. 9. *If ye will not hear, if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts; I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings, because ye do not lay it to heart.* Oh, that this example of the Jews were a warning to the Christian world, and might stir us up to duty; lest, in the divine displeasure, we lose our temple, our peace, and our other precious privileges by our sins! what rich blessings has heaven bestowed on the *British* isle; and what judgments have not also been inflicted; and more threatned, if we repent not! years of pale famine and bloody war, have been in our land; even rebellion *itself*, in all its terrible aspects, has of late years, awoke in our isle; and altho' the kind providence of heaven hath, once and again, baffled the attempts of antichristian emissaries, and frustrated the design of a popish pretender; yet alas, how have the surviving age still continued to wax wanton; and, by prodigality, debauchery, and immoralities of every kind, have highly provoked the God of our mercies *! ah! how has the cry of Atheism, impiety, prophanity, sacrilege, murder, drunkenness, swear-

* O BRITAIN! often rescn'd, often crown'd,
 Beyond thy merit, or most sanguine hopes,
 With all that's great in war, or sweet in peace!
 Know from what source thy signal blessings flow.
 Tho' blest with spirits ardent in the field,
 Tho' cover'd various oceans with thy fleets,
 Tho' fenc'd with rocks, and moated by the main,
 Thy trust repose in a far stronger guard;

swearing, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, divisions, and the want of brotherly love and charity, gone up to heaven, with a cry against us! Oh, that this inconsiderate generation would take warning, and beware of sinning away our spiritual, as the Jews did their carnal temple! That peace may be within Zion's walls, and prosperity within her palaces; Let us away with spirits of strife, lest we rent the body of Christ—Let us love our glorious head, and for his sake, let us love our brethren in the Lord.—Let no vails, or partitions of envy, be set up, lest thereby we procure to ourselves a curse †, like those that rebuilt *Jericho*. Since Christ has rent the first vail, let none of his disciples set up new vails of superstition, darkness, and distraction, lest the Lord be provoked to break both them, and it in to pieces.

Did

In HIM, who thee, tho' *naked*, could defend;
 Tho' *weak*, could *strengthen*; *ruin'd*, could *restore*.
 —Well may we tremble now! what manners reign?
 But wherefore ask we? when a *true* reply
 Would shock too much! kind Heaven avert events,
 Whose fatal nature might reply *too plain*!
 Heav'n's half bar'd arm of vengeance has been wav'd
 In *northern* skys; and pointed to the *south*.
 Vengeance, delayed, but gathers, and ferments;
 More formidably blackens in the wind,
 Brews deeper draughts of unrelenting wrath,
 And higher charges the suspended storm.

Night-Thoughts.

† *Maimonides* assigns for the reason of this anathema, that the miracle of the subversion of *Jericho*, might be kept in perpetual memory. Yet *Jericho* was afterwards rebuilt by *Hiel the Bethelite*, who laid the foundation thereof in *Abiram* his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son *Segub*, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by *Josuah*, the son of *Nun*, 1 Kings xvi. 34. And indeed, 'tis certain that this curse, only extended to the builder of *Jericho* and his family, but not to those who should dwell in it, after it was rebuilt; for afterwards, many of the Lord's prophets were inhabitants of it: and from this curied city, the Lord Jesus Christ called a rich man, and a publican, to be converted. *Luke* xix. 1. 10.

Did the earth quake, at the Saviour's crucifixion? —see then, O my soul, how dreadful and terrible are the severities of God's wrath, against sin! By shaking the globe of this earth, JEHOVAH threatened the utter subversion of these bloody murderers, who had crucified the King of glory. If *Korah*, and his accomplices were swallowed up of the earth, for their rebelling against *Moses*, the servant of God: of how much sorer punishment are those worthy, who said of God's own Son, *This is the heir, come let us kill him?* Oh, that they, who deny Christ, in his truths, for the transitory things of time, would consider this; and remember, that, as the earth once quaked, at his crucifixion, so, it will again tremble, at his second coming; when the wicked will find no shelter, either in caves, or mountains, or buildings, to fly into.

Yes, that very God, who makes the earth to quake, is able enough to punish the workers of iniquity: He discovered, even to the wicked, by this miracle, what he can do; and as it is of his infinite mercy, that he forbears: so, if his patience lead not men to repentance, patience itself will become the forerunner of unutterable vengeance.—By shaking the earth, God threatned the Jews; but when their obstinance still continued, he made the promised land *to spue them out*, as it had done to the nations before them, according to that threatening denounced *Lev. xviii. 28*. If the power of Jehovah made the whole world to tremble, how will his enemies withstand him, when he comes full of anger, and wrath, to take vengeance on every impenitent wretch. Is sin, such a heavy load, that the earth quaked, when Christ was making satisfaction, for the sins of his people; how dreadful, then, must that load of wrath be, which will sink the implacable sinner, into the bottomless pit of eternal destruction! Dost thou ask, O my soul, why the earth

totters

totters not now, on its basis; seeing the wicked, even at this day, are crucifying Christ afresh, by horrid oaths, and blasphemies, by contemning his sabbaths, reviling his members, mocking his word, despising his ordinances, abusing his creatures, and, by a thousand such impieties, as might make the very earth to shrink, and to tremble? Know, then, that, altho' the Lord now holds his hand from miracles, he will not always keep it back from executing plagues and judgments; he may forbear a little, but will not forget the affronts, that are done him, by his enemies; altho' he delay the execution of vengeance for a while, yet, *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence, fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him,* Psal. 1. 3.

The rocks rent—Rocks of stone are sooner rent, than the heart of man can be touched, or broken. Oh hypocritical professors, ye have not got a real and thorow discovery of sin, or else it would have put a stop to your prophane mirth, and lascivious wantonness; and made you, with *Ezra, Jeremiah*, etc. to rent your hearts before the Lord, and to weep night and day, for the abominations in our Israel—Methinks, the carnal man is, now, whispering in an objection, in mine ear, “Why then, it seems, the
“real Christian cannot enjoy the chearful temper of
“mind, which I possess; but must still be like one
“of a broken, and dejected spirit; sullen, melan-
“choly, and morose, in his very countenance.”—No, far from it, the believer has, of all men living, the best and most solid ground, to be of a chearful countenance, and of a joyful disposition: but, his joy is founded upon another, and an infinitely preferable basis, to that of the hypocrite, or prophane: The *last* will rejoice, at the conquest of a little perishing riches; the *first*, at gaining the kingdom of
heaven,

Did the earth quake, at the Saviour's crucifixion? —see then, O my soul, how dreadful and terrible are the severities of God's wrath, against sin! By shaking the globe of this earth, JEHOVAH threatened the utter subversion of these bloody murderers, who had crucified the King of glory. If *Korah*, and his accomplices were swallowed up of the earth, for their rebelling against *Moses*, the servant of God: of how much sorer punishment are those worthy, who said of God's own Son, *This is the heir, come let us kill him?* Oh, that they, who deny Christ, in his truths, for the transitory things of time, would consider this; and remember, that, as the earth once quaked, at his crucifixion, so, it will again tremble, at his second coming; when the wicked will find no shelter, either in caves, or mountains, or buildings, to fly into.

Yes, that very God, who makes the earth to quake, is able enough to punish the workers of iniquity: He discovered, even to the wicked, by this miracle, what he can do; and as it is of his infinite mercy, that he forbears: so, if his patience lead not men to repentance, patience itself will become the forerunner of unutterable vengeance.—By shaking the earth, God threatned the Jews; but when their obstinance still continued, he made the promised land *to spue them out*, as it had done to the nations before them, according to that threatening denounced *Lev. xviii. 28*. If the power of Jehovah made the whole world to tremble, how will his enemies withstand him, when he comes full of anger, and wrath, to take vengeance on every impenitent wretch. Is sin, such a heavy load, that the earth quaked, when Christ was making satisfaction, for the sins of his people; how dreadful, then, must that load of wrath be, which will sink the implacable sinner, into the bottomless pit of eternal destruction! Dost thou ask, O my soul, why the earth

totters

totters not now, on its basis; seeing the wicked, even at this day, are crucifying Christ afresh, by horrid oaths, and blasphemies, by contemning his sabbaths, reviling his members, mocking his word, despising his ordinances, abusing his creatures, and, by a thousand such impieties, as might make the very earth to shrink, and to tremble? Know, then, that, altho' the Lord now holds his hand from miracles, he will not always keep it back from executing plagues and judgments; he may forbear a little, but will not forget the affronts, that are done him, by his enemies; altho' he delay the execution of vengeance for a while, yet, *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence, fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him*, Psal. 1. 3.

The rocks rent—Rocks of stone are sooner rent, than the heart of man can be touched, or broken. Oh hypocritical professors, ye have not got a real and thorow discovery of sin, or else it would have put a stop to your prophane mirth, and lascivious wantonness; and made you, with *Ezra, Jeremiah*, etc. to rent your hearts before the Lord, and to weep night and day, for the abominations in our Israel—Methinks, the carnal man is, now, whispering in an objection, in mine ear, “Why then, it seems, the
“real Christian cannot enjoy the chearful temper of
“mind, which I possess; but must still be like one
“of a broken, and dejected spirit; sullen, melan-
“choly, and morose, in his very countenance.”—No, far from it, the believer has, of all men living, the best and most solid ground, to be of a chearful countenance, and of a joyful disposition: but, his joy is founded upon another, and an infinitely preferable basis, to that of the hypocrite, or prophane: The *last* will rejoice, at the conquest of a little perishing riches; the *first*, at gaining the kingdom of
heaven,

heaven, for his inheritance*. The *one*, at the victory obtained over his neighbour; the *other*, at a more triumphant victory, over the devil, the world, and the flesh; the *one*, at gaining a good character among men; the *other*, in having his peace made with God, through the blood of a slain Redeemer. Should the rocky heart now stand it out, yet tremble it must, at hearing the universal crack of nature. Oh, sinner, compare that day with this day; and think, how unable thou wilt be, to endure the sight; when, with thine own eyes, thou shalt behold the earth burning, the sea roaring, every rock dissolving, devils raging, sinners trembling, and Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, with the glorious company of angels and saints, to judge the world.

The graves were opened, and the bodies of many saints, which slept, arose.—Christ, by his death, hath vanquished death, even within the grave, its own chamber and fort: this Goliath, this monstrous giant is subdued; the prison of the grave flies open, and the dead go out, which beareth witness to the words of infallible veracity, John xi. *I am the resurrection and the life †, he that believeth in me, though he was*

* There's nothing earthly can allure his mind
 Who keeps a Heav'n in view;
 Who with ambition unconfin'd,
 A bliss unbounded does pursue.
 Lay crowns and scepters, at his feet,
 Let riches, pleasures, honours wait,
 And fondly court his smile,
 He'd scorn the charms of things so vain,
 Spurn them away with just disdain,
 Nor count them worth his while.

Contempt of the World.

† That is, I am the author and principal efficient cause of the resurrection; and this with respect to both natures: (1.) His divine nature is the efficient cause of the resurrection; he shall raise our bodies out of the dust, by the power of his Godhead. (2.) His human nature

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was dead, yet shall he live. Whatever part of sea or land may contain the dust of the saints, it will be but for a little that their bodies will be detained in prison; they must be surrendered up, at whatever instant Christ calls for them, even as the members must needs follow, when the head draws them.— There was not now an universal resurrection of the dead; it was not *all*, but *many* of the saints that arose; by which is *intimated*, that the general resurrection is reserved until the last day, of which this was a pledge or earnest.

And now, my soul, say not, that these amazing displays of divine power were lavish, or unnecessary, at thy Saviour's crucifixion: no, they were necessary, in respect of Christ himself, to testify not only his innocency, but his majesty also; his *innocence*, that he was, as *Pilate's* wife said of him,* a just man; and his *majesty*, as the centurion cried and confessed,

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fed,

ture is the exemplary cause or pattern of the resurrection; for which reason Christ is called the *first-born from the dead*. Christ and believers are one mystical body, therefore is not Christ perfectly risen, till all his members are risen with him. Indeed Christ's personal resurrection was perfect when he arose, and all believers arose representatively in him; yet, till all believers arise personally, the resurrection of Christ has not received its utmost perfection.

Burkitt.

* With respect to the dream which *Pilate's* wife had, the night before she gave this testimony to Christ's innocency; some think that her dream was *diabolical*, and that Satan hoped thereby to prevent the work of man's redemption by the death of Christ. But if so, why had not *Pilate* the dream, rather than his wife? — Others are of opinion, that, as she had intelligence of our Lord's apprehension, and knew, by his character, that he was a righteous person, her imagination being struck with these ideas, did naturally produce the dream we read of. But, as our Saviour was apprehended about midnight, out of the city, and without *Philip's* privity, and detain'd in the house of *Annas*, until it was day, there was no possibility for her having any notice of it, before she went to sleep, and therefore we have the juster reason to believe, that this dream was sent providentially upon her,

fed,† That *truly this man was the Son of God*.—While he sojourn'd in the coasts of mortality, Christ seem'd as a *worm, and no man*, Psal. xxii. the contempt and derision of the people; yet, even at his death, he is not left without a witness, for the very inanimate creation proclaim his Godhead—These miracles brought in a discovery of the Mediator's power, and extensive authority; and the very lifeless creation express their obedience, and demonstrate, that this was their Lord, who now suffer'd; and that they were all ready to execute vengeance upon his murderers—The sun in the firmament put on mourning, and for three hours (from twelve to three) refus'd to emit his rays when our Lord was suffering; and the whole frame of nature appear'd in a funeral habit §———And indeed, the darkned heavens would have rained fire upon these savage

her, for the clearer manifestation of our Lord's innocence—when all his disciples were fled from him, when none of his friends durst speak a word for him, God raises up a woman, a stranger, a Pagan, to give evidence of his innocency.

Calmet and Burkitt.

† There is a tradition concerning this *Centurion*; that his name was Longinus, and that after his conversion to Christianity, being expelled the Roman army in which he serv'd, he preach'd *Jesus Christ* at *Cappadocia*, where he was beheaded, and his head carried to *Pilate*——But this is, indeed, only a tradition, and may be the rather suspected as *fabulous*, as the genuine histories of these times take no particular notice thereof.

§ The sun beheld it—No, the shocking scene
Drove back his chariot; *midnight* vail'd his face;
Not such as *this*; not such as nature makes;
A midnight nature shudder'd to behold;
A *midnight* new! a dread eclipse (without
Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown!
Sun! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain! Or start
At that enormous load of human guilt,
Which bow'd his blessed head; o'erwhelm'd his cross;
Made groan the centre! burst earth's marble womb,
With pangs, strange pangs! deliver'd of her dead;
Hell howl'd; and heav'n that hour let fall a tear;

Heav'n

vage men, who were embruing their hands in the Redeemer's blood; the trembling earth would have shaken them to pieces; the renting rocks would have tumbled upon them; the opening graves, having let forth their prisoners, would have swallowed them up quick, had the Lord issued forth such orders: these waited his command, for displaying the divine anger. O infatuate people, that saw the very earth, and rocks, rising to speak out against their unparalleled barbarity to the *Messiah*; and yet were not ashamed! But ah! still more infatuate the wretch, who, under the sun shine of the gospel, crucifies afresh the Son of God.

In fine, these miracles were necessary, in respect of the disconsolate women that stood by, when Christ was expiring on the cross; and tended not a little to confirm their faith. These languishing female disciples, seeing him hanging on the accursed tree, whom they took to be the Saviour of Israel; viewing him now exposed to all the tyranny of the Jews, while the bloody hands of his cruel enemies, spare not, severely to probe and search into all the parts of his blessed body, head and hands, feet and sides; his body racked with torment, his soul filled with unutterable and inconceivable agony, and himself crying out, like a man sorrowful and forlorn. All this might have perhaps bred a suspicion in their hearts, that he was (as the Jews called him) a *deceiver*, and now utterly cast off: well, to check this doubt, in the very birth, he shakes the *earth*; rends the rocks, and raises the dead; that as they saw him dying, and so must account him truly man; so they might perceive him doing these miracles, which no mere man, but the everliving God could have done.

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These

Heav'n wept, that men might smile! heaven bled that man
Might never die———

Night-Thoughts.

These amazing wonders blow the spark of their faith, that was almost dying and expiring, with their Saviour; and root in their hearts a deep and lasting persuasion, that he was the promised Messiah, the **EMMANUEL**, God-with-us—What a check did these silent preachers give to those disciples, who foully deserted and forsook their Lord! Christ had formerly said, Luke xix. *If they should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out.* So here it came to pass; the disciples are silent and the stones speak; they forsake Christ, and the *rocks* proclaim him; the *living* despise him, and the dead arise to attend him; the inhabitants of the earth blaspheme him, and the earth itself trembles before him; these that worship in the temple crucify him, and behold, *the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose.*

M E D I T A T I O N VI.

On the Marks and Privileges of Believers.

HOW deeply art thou interested in this subject, O my soul. Thy state, thro' the everlasting ages of eternity, depends upon the claim thou canst now make to the distinguishing marks, and precious privileges of the saints. In the creation of man, he was formed a glorious creature, superior to the rest of this lower creation *.——he
was

* Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
God-like erect! with native honour clad

was composed of soul and body, and in them there was a right order and subordination, suitable to the nature of each. But alas, sin entering into the world, hath defaced, and marred the beauty of this epitome of the creation ; and hath driven man, from the due line of subordination to his Maker. By sin, he proudly attempted to exalt himself above God ; and lamentably subjected himself below his senses ; so that he, who was made a free prince, under the sole command of his Creator, became a bond slave to the lusts of his own flesh ; the flesh †, having once ascended the throne, continues to keep it, and lords it over the whole man—Yet, however defaced and disordered the first creation is, by sin, become ; when the second creation commences in the soul, the creature is made new in Christ, and is formed again by his powerful spirit. O blessed change ! the sentence of condemnation and death is turned into joyful tydings of acquittance and life, the flesh is cast down, and exiled, as an usurping tyrant, from the throne in the heart ; and Christ, as a glorious

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In naked majesty, seem'd Lords of all :
And worthy seem'd : for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure ;
—ADAM the goodliest man of men since born
His sons ; the fairest of her daughters EVE.

Milton.

† The word FLESH is homonimous, and taken several ways, as
(1.) By a Hebrew phrase, for the whole man. *Gen.* vi. 3. (2.) For the human nature of Christ. *John* i. 14. (3) For the things belonging to this life. *1 Cor.* vii. 8. (4) For the external aspect and appearance of things. *John* viii. 15. (5.) For natural relation. *2 Sam.* xix. 12. (6.) For the impotence and weakness of men, *Jer.* xvii. 5.
—By flesh is *here* understood, (and thus 'tis most frequently applied in sacred writ to signify) the corrupt and depraved nature of man, in his fallen state; not this carneous mass and lump of refined and well-proportion'd clay, which the vigorous soul actuates, animates, and steers about, as the instrument of producing its acts and operations by, and which, after its separation from the soul, falls again into dust ;

but

conqueror, repairs the old breach, removes the old sentence, and establishes new principles in the soul.

Be it thy business, this evening, my soul, to enquire into some of these distinguishing marks, by which such a change may be discovered; and, who knows, what a happy issue to thy peace and rest, may be the result of the enquiry. What a strange and wonderful change is wrought on the believer's heart! he becomes a new creature; and one of these things which discriminates the rational and immortal soul of man, from the spirits of beasts that perish, is, that the human soul is capable of reflex acts; and with a reflecting eye, can look back upon itself, and consider what is done with it, or what itself has been a-doing. How, then, will the affections and inclinations of a believer run in a new channel! these vicious practices, he formerly delighted in, and was strongly attached unto—these that were once his *Delilahs*, his right-hand and right-eye sins, which he dearly loved and was pleased with, are now in some measure, cut off and pluck out; at least there is a blow given to the root; and he is ready to express his honest sentiments, in such language as this; *Hitherto my heart—my deceitful heart has been roving after many Lords, and many lovers; hitherto my pursuit has been after those things which I now desire to detest, to loath, and abhor.—Prayer, fasting, self-examination, and the publick ordinances &c. how tedious—how irksom were they once to my soul; but now I desire to take pleasure and delight in them: one day, in the Lord's courts, is now preferable to a thousand elsewhere; I esteem the words of his mouth, more than my necessary food; and 'tis*
alas

but the flesh signifies the vicious and unregenerate nature of the whole unconverted man, whose mind is enmity against God; and also the remainders of natural corruption; which even is too often to be found among the converted themselves.

alas my sorrow and complaint, that I cannot more fervently and affectionately love him.

True, the change wrought on the believer does not imply an alteration in the essence or substance of the soul and body. no, the same body, and the same soul, with all the members of the one, and all the faculties of the other, do still continue: but there is a new and comely order wrought in the whole. The bodily members that formerly were instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are changed into instruments of righteousness unto God. The powers of the soul, that were formerly disordered and as irregular in their several operations, as the discording and jarring strings of a musical instrument, are now set right, and harmonize with the will of the supreme Excellence, of the great Creator of all. But such a perfect change is not to be expected to subsist in the regenerate, in this life, as that their minds should never dissent from the perfect harmony of good affections, or that universal holiness in heart and life should dwell in them, without any remainders of sin and corruption. No, the inspired penmen of sacred writ had experience of the contrary.

The royal Psalmist of Israel complained, Psalm lxxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me;* and the great apostle of the Gentiles uttered it as the subject of his soul's lamentation, Rom. viii. 21. 24. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* and indeed if we should say that we had no sin, we would but deceive ourselves. So long as the believer travels through this world, he carries with him a body of sin and death; but, at the same time it is the mark of Christ's family, that they will not allow themselves in a course of sin; 'tis the great part of their business to be wrestling against it, and thro' grace to be

endeavouring, in the use of means, to have it purged away, by the purifying influences of the holy spirit †. Sin may break in upon them, like a thief or a robber, but will neither be entertained in their hearts, as a friend; nor will it obtain leave to harbour and lodge in their bosom. True conversion hews not down one sin, to heave up another; it pulls not down pride, to exalt avarice; it quenches not lust, to leave the burning flame of passion and revenge; but it levels at the root, and strikes at the bottom of all sin.

Nor is true faith barren, but productive of excellent fruits; the believer's practice, as well as his principle, will undergo an alteration. 'Tis the philosopher's maxim *operari sequitur esse*. 'As a thing is in being, so it is in operation;' and every being and essence produces acts suitable thereunto; even so, these, that are in Christ, will be bringing forth fruits, in some degree, suitable to such a character. The Jews were justly upbraided, for the inconsistency betwixt what they professed, and what in reality they were. *Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do*. If any be in CHRIST, to HIM they will give obedience; they will be bringing forth fruit, becoming the branches of such a vine.

The renewed soul cannot miss to behold every object, with a new eye; as an apostle saith, *They will know no man after the flesh*. They will see
how

† Each fav'rite lust that in your bosom lies,
Expell'd, with indignation, sacrifice.
'Tis madness to indulge forbidden joy,
And hug the vipers that would you destroy:
When sin prevails, thro' weakness or surprize,
And pressing guilt upon your conscience lies;
Admit no respite till 'tis purg'd away,
Renew repentance, each returning day:
For guilt unpurg'd becomes a grievous load
Both to the sp'rit of man and sp'rit of God.

Christian-Duty.

how monstrous a thing, how heaven-provoking and soul-damning that is, which makes a gracious and merciful Creator, to loath and abhor the sinful creature; and to plunge both soul and body, into the jaws of eternal death; they will esteem spiritual grace, at a higher rate, than ever, and will look upon all earthly, and sensual enjoyments, with a more undervaluing eye, than heretofore. In fine, they will account worldly pomp, honour, riches, and glory, as but dung and dross, in respect of precious Christ; and with *Solomon*, will consider of all things below the sun, but as *vanity and vexation of spirit*; and thus, viewing the divine JESUS, with a more prizing and pleasing eye, than ever; they will be ready to cry, at the ravishing sight, with panting David, *whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* Psal. lxxiii. 28.

Yet, the believer will, doubtless, have many inward struggles and combats, which the unregenerate know nothing about. How perpetual is the war carried on in him, betwixt the flesh and the spirit; the old and the new man; the regenerate and the unregenerate part! now, that he has experienced the pangs of a new birth, he feels there are two opposites, flesh and spirit, like *Jacob* and *Esau* in *Rebecca's* womb, always struggling and wrestling together; and, indeed, the battle great and bloody as it is, will undoubtedly continue, until the house of *David* finally prevail against the house of *Saul*; and the spiritual *Israelite* obtain a compleat victory over the carnal *Amalakite*.

HAIL, ye happy ones, who are thus distinguished, from the world, by a true and lively faith in Christ Jesus! go on in your combat, and may you prosper under the great CAPTAIN of salvation. You have comfortable news sent you, from heaven, Rom. viij.

1. There

1. *There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus* *. How great—how exceeding great, and precious, are the believer's privileges! he stands, no more, as a condemned malefactor, in the sight of a holy God; but, as one justified by the precious blood of the Lamb. Nor can it be otherwise, because all that are in Christ are just and righteous, in respect of the justice and righteousness of their Redeemer, imputed to them by God, and apprehended of them by a lively and saving faith: and so, they become as righteous in God's sight, as if they themselves had fulfilled the law, and satisfied justice, in their own persons (which thro' eternity they never could have done). Thus, they are freed from the condemnation, and the curse, pronounced against such as are out of Christ. Nor would it be consistent with the justice of God, to repute a believer as under the condemnatory guilt of sin, and to pour the curses of a broken law upon him; since he is in Christ, who hath already in his human nature bore the sins of his people, and also the punishment due thereunto, hath satisfied fully divine justice, hath cancelled that obligation, which did witness to the sinner's guilt, and bound him to undergo the punishment.

Hence that fundamental article of the Christian faith is comfortably confirmed to believers; that their

* Οὐδεν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.——Unconverted sinners are under the damnatory sentence and curse of a broken law; they stand liable to all the miseries, which it may please God to inflict on them, in this life: and to everlasting destruction in that which is to come. But the apostle here proclaims a freedom, both from the guilt and punishment of sin, to them that are in *Christ Jesus*.—There is not any sentence of condemnation (ὁ δεῖ ν.) that can come against them, either from the law, or from the gospel: they are not indeed altogether freed from corruption, nor from correction, while they remain on the coasts of mortality; but even now it may be said of them, that they are passed from death to life.

their justification, in the sight of God, is obtained *only* by the merit of Jesus Christ, by his righteousness, *alone*, imputed to them. The believer being in Christ, and Christ in the believer, it cannot fail, but that the blessings and graces of the Redeemer's purchase, do really belong to the saints: as he, that knew no sin, was made sin for them, so they *are made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21. Upon a solid foundation, may I then proclaim comfort to all that are in this happy and blessed state. Yes, O believer, thou needest not fear any miseries; or calamities, that can befall thee, in this world; neither hast thou cause to complain, as those that are without hope. Are thy iniquities heinous? Yet, shall they all be drowned, in the ocean of Christ's blood: They will never be charged upon thee, nor stand up against thee, either to destroy thy soul, in this life; or to condemn thee, in the world to come. Art thou afraid of the fruits of sin; that thou be over-burthened with pinching poverty, sore and lingering sickness, unjust reproaches, or cruel and barbarous persecution? Or, art thou crossed in thy designs, does providence sometimes frustrate thy expectations; and art thou hence tempted to conclude thyself the most miserable, and unfortunate of creatures †? Remember, if thou belongest to Christ, these are not sent as plagues and judgments to thee, but are the trials and fatherly chastisements, which come from thy heavenly parent, as means of preventing sin for the
fu-

† Tell freely what's thy grudge, and only bear
An answer, calmly, in thy turn to hear.
'Thou'rt vex'd, thou say'st, with cross events, and griev'd
With fruitless labours, and with hopes deceiv'd:
The stubborn course of things gainsays thy will;
Thy fate is to be contradicted still:
Whilst, others, who find providence more kind,
Live always gay, and sail before the wind.
O vast mistake! —————

future: and all the poison and venom, in these rods, were sucked away by Christ.—Be thy afflictions what they will, thou must neither despond nor despair, but, under them all, rouse up thy spirit, and reason with David, Psal. xliii. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?*

Unspeakably great are the believer's privileges—The Jews boasted, that they were of the seed of Abraham; and indeed, they were descended of no mean pedigree, but our Saviour checks their insulting boast, by distinguishing betwixt a twofold privilege of this kind. They that are slaves to sin may, for a time, enjoy the outward privileges of the house of God; but it will not be long, until the great master of the family turn them out of doors; while the adopted children of God abide in the house for ever—Theirs and *only* theirs, it is, to be freed from the curse of a broken covenant; the heavy yoke of the law is loosed from their necks; and the easy burden of the gospel put on, *Matth. xi. 28.* The law required perfect obedience, and under the pain of a curse, *Gal. iii.* and while it required our duty, it furnished no strength to perform it: ay, but *what the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh* §. *Rom. viii. 3.* Oh glorious privilege, purchased by the blood of JESUS! now, the believer's duty becomes his delight, and his frailty hinders
not

§ *What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh*
— The law cannot justify nor save any man, because it demands that which the fallen creature cannot perform. The law is not weakened, either in precept or doctrine; but *it is weak through the flesh*, i. e. through our corrupt, depraved and rebellious nature; its weakness to save doth not arise from itself, but from us; the law re-
tains

not his acceptance, through Christ. The hand-writing of ordinances, which was against him, is cancelled; and, when the seal and hand-writing is torn from the bond, and nailed to the cross, the debtor is set at liberty, and becomes acquitted, justified, and absolved: what then remains, but that all the children of God shall, in the end, be totally freed from every snare and temptation of the devil — from the prevalent corruption of the flesh, warring against the spirit; and from the treachery of their own deceitful hearts, that are *now* so ready to betray them.

Ye were by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. Yes, O believers, ye were once detained slaves, and captives of Satan; but now, a stronger than he hath bound this strong enemy, and cast him out

tains its authority of commanding, but we have lost all ability to give obedience thereto. No meer man can perfectly keep the law, nor make the least amends for the injurys, already offered unto it; and hence it is, that the law is not able to save; thus, the fault is not in the law, but in us. Yet the law is not useless, but necessary for discovering the divine will concerning our obedience; and it is a school-master, for bringing men to Christ: but, to expect justification, in God's sight, by the law: would be no less folly, than to seek life in death, heaven in hell, or salvation in condemnation.

When the law could not justify, God sending his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh; and for sin (by being a sacrifice for sin) condemned sin in the flesh. — ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιωματὶ σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας, καταβίβει τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. God sent his SON — not the angels, that are his sons by creation — nor the saints, that are his sons by adoption — but his own only, eternally begotten, SON. He sent his SON, in the likeness of sinful flesh; he took *really* on him, and assumed, to the unity of his divine person, a human nature — And in that nature, the SON of God was counted a sinner; was liable to the many infirmities of weariness, hunger, sleep, &c. that attend the children of men; was condemned as a sinner; and for taking away sin, he did actually die, and became a sacrifice for sin. Thus, tho' he had no sin of his own, yet was he reputed a sinner, and came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

out of doors. The precious blood of Christ hath ransomed you from the hands of justice; and of course, Satan's power over you must fall; as the jailor loses power of the prisoner, when he obtains a legal discharge—True, indeed, Satan is a haughty and malicious enemy, and every deliverance out of his hand, is a glorious act of omnipotent power; but Christ rebuked this implacable adversary, and gained a compleat triumph and victory, Col. ii. 15. *Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, upon the cross.* Nay, believer, the poisonous sting, and the destructive stroke of death itself, cannot injure thee; it may hurt a little, but it cannot kill. *O death, where is thy sting?* 'Tis only guilt that arms death with its terrifying power; when our bones are full of the sins of our youth, which ly down with us in the dust, *Job. xx*; when death, like a dragon, pulls the guilty wretch, as a prey in its jaws, to its dreadful den. But from death, as a curse; and from the grave, as a prison, Christ hath set his people at liberty.

Are not thy privileges wonderful, thy liberties amazing, O my soul? Yes, the freedom of the sons of God, can never be sufficiently admired, by angels, or men. How surprizing is it, that ever it should be thought or imagined, that any of rebellious and fallen *Adam's* family, who were deeper in arrears to divine justice, than they could have paid, thro' eternity; *these* that were under the condemnatory sentence of the law; *these* that were under the power, and in the possession of Satan; *these* that were bound, with so many strong chains, in their spiritual prison; *these* whose understandings were cloathed with ignorance, their wills with obstinacy, their hearts with a hardened stupidity, and their affections with a thousand bewitching vanities; *these* that so hugged their own slavery,

as industriously to oppose all means, methods, and instruments of deliverance——For such as *these*, to be set at liberty, and admitted into the glorious freedom of the sons of God, is *truly* astonishing and full of wonder; and what raises the admiration, is the dear and expensive purchase. What that captain said *Acts* xxii. *With a great sum, I have obtained this freedom*, may be, with the greatest propriety, applied here. For the price of the believer's privileges was a price of infinite value*, even the precious blood of the Son of God. *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish, and without spot* †.

Rejoice, rejoice then, O my soul, and say, now and for ever, that the Christian has ground to rejoice, above all others in the world. Will not the captive
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* The late reverend and worthy Mr. John M^r. Lawin observes, It is a just and usual expression, That Christ's satisfaction is of infinite value: it were a happy thing, if it were as usual for us to have a suitable impression of it. Infinite value is what we cannot affirm of any other manifestation of God that can be conceived, not the highest degree of grace or of glory, or of all the created glory in the world put together.

† 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. All the treasures of an universe was not a ransom, sufficient, for one soul, nor could the blood of all the creatures in the world have been a sacrifice of sufficient compensation to divine justice, for the sins of one man. And says Dr. Clarke, as to the difficulty with respect to the justice of laying the punishment of sinners upon an innocent person; this difficulty is entirely removed by the voluntary consent and choice of the person, in taking the punishment upon himself. For though to punish an innocent person instead of the guilty, is evidently unjust; yet to permit an innocent person to take it voluntarily upon himself is by no means so. On the contrary, it is an instance of the greatest goodness, and mercy, to find out such an expedient: and as the love and humility of Christ is inexpressibly great in condescending to assume our nature, and submitting to an ignominious death, even the death of the cross; so the mercy and goodness of God can never be worthily and sufficiently acknowledged, in accepting this sacrifice, and so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

and the slave rejoice, when he recovereth his liberty? The very birds of the air prefer their freedom, in the woods (though they should wander there *meagre* and hungry) to a golden cage, with the richest entertainment.

It is undoubtedly natural for every creature in bondage, to rejoice at obtaining liberty; and who ever had so great cause of rejoicing, as those who have been pressed under the weight of sin; and are now got rid, in some measure, of the intolerable burden? What was said of Bābylon, shadows forth the state of God's people, under their spiritual bondage, with the way and manner of their deliverance, Zech. ix. 11. *By the blood of the covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.* And as the tribes, in their return from thence, were overwhelmed with joy and astonishment, Ps. cxxvi. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing;* so may the believer cry, and shout aloud for joy—when the prodigal son * (which is the emblem of a returning sinner) was returned to his father's house, there was heard nothing but musick, mirth and feasting in the house. Even so, all God's family rejoices at the conversion of sinners—The angels in heaven rejoice, when a soul is recovered out of the power of Satan;

* *Luke xv. 11.*—This parable is deservedly reckoned a *master-piece* in its kind, and what cannot be paralleled by any of the *apologues*, or allegorical writings of *Heathen Authors*. It is adorn'd and beautify'd with the most glowing colours, and lively similitudes. It is carried on, and conducted with admirable wisdom and proportion, in the *parts*, as well as in the *whole*, and there is so exact a relation between the things represented, and the representations of them, that the most *elevated* understanding will admire, and the *lowest* capacity discover, the excellent and most useful moral that lies under so thin and fine a *veil*.

Stackhouse.

Satan; and shall not the believer himself, who shares in so unspeakable a mercy, greatly rejoice in Christ the Saviour. Yea doubtless, may the ground of this joy swallow up all the little troubles, and sorrows, which he can meet with, from the things of this world.

Beware, O my soul, of returning again to folly! how unreasonable and unaccountable is it for those, that have so great and precious privileges, to apostatize into the ways of sin! would it not be justly esteemed the height of madness, for a delivered captive to put his feet *again* in the stocks and shackles, his hands into the manacles and fetters, and his neck into the iron yoke, out of which he hath escaped.—

Has Christ purchased such privileges to believers? Let the frame and temper of my heart, be ever disposed to distribute and scatter liberally to the necessities of his distressed members †: and that with a spirit of alacrity and freedom; with a single eye to his glory, and not by force or constraint—Every creature works according to the principle of its nature, the tender mother requires no entreaty to draw forth her breasts, to her sucking child; it would be idle and vain to command the sea to ebb and flow, at its stated times; this it doth by the appointment of God; let the renewed soul act also from new principles and motives; and even in the case of suffering for Christ, Let us undergo cheerfully, influenced by the same noble spirit, that made Paul say, *I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Acts xxi. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not*

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† Blest is the man whose bowels move,
And melt with pity to the poor,
Whose soul by sympathizing Love,
Feels what his fellow-saints endure:

Watts.

worthy to be compared with that glory which shall be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18.

M E D I T A T I O N VII.

On the Christian's ground of Comfort, under every Trial.

IT is an aphorism in divinity, *that the cross is the way to the crown.* The *Christian's* road is strait and narrow, hard and difficult; but at last, it leads to a glorious and blessed land: the opposition he meets with on the journey, is great and mighty; for we wrestle, not only against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers; and yet, an inspired writer exhorts, Jam. i. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into diverse temptations* *. Religion, even with all the crosses that attend it, is not in itself, either gloomy or melancholy. No, it is full of joy and comfort to those, who have the spiritual eye, to discern its ravishing delights. It is sometimes with the Christian, under trials, as it is said of some birds, who sing in the winter and stormy season, as well as in the spring or summer sun shine: like *Moses's* burning bush, Christ's lambs can live in the fire, and not be consumed; like the three children, they can walk in the warmest furnace of affliction, and not be burned; or with *Paul* and *Silas*, they can sing in the cold goal, and the nauseous

† What the apostle here calls *πειρασμοις* temptations; he speaks of in the 3 verse, as δοκιμων της πιστεως, trial of faith; whence it is evident, that all the afflictions and temptations, to which the Christian is exposed, are sent as trials, either of their profession and constancy in the faith, or of some particular grace, which may be thereby chiefly exercised.

ous prison ; yea, when the stormy billows rage, and the impetuous inundations threaten utter desolation, Then, *even then*, can the Christian sit, like *Noah* in his ark †, safe and secure ; while the waves beat on every side.

Mistake not the case, my soul ; say not, this is a whimsical notion, a groundless flight of fancy ; for the experience of thousands now in heaven, and the infallible word of God himself, confirms it to be a solid, and well grounded observation ; Heb. x. 3. *Ye took the spoiling of your goods joyfully*. When Job was crossed, with one trial upon the back of another, yet the great man sums up all, in a short anthem of praise, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh, blessed be the name of the Lord **. Paul in his greatest sufferings had an exuberancy of joy, 2 Cor. vii. 4. *I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation*. And again, he riseth to an higher strain, Rom. v. 3. *We glory in tribulation, — knowing that tribulation worketh patience §*.

Look in, my soul, and see what a multiplicity of trials the Christian is exposed unto. His three grand

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† *Mediis tranquillis in undis.*

* See how he looks above instruments, and keeps his eye upon the first cause ; he doth not say, *the Lord gave*, and the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* have taken away, God made me rich and the devil has made me poor, but he that gave has taken, and for that reason he is dumb, and has nothing to say, because God did it ; he that gave all may take which, and when, how, and how much he pleaseth. *Seneca* could argue thus, *abstulit sed et dedit* ; and *Epictetus* argues excellently (ch. xv.) When thou art deprived of any comfort, suppose a child taken away by death, or a part of thy estate lost, say not ἀπολεσά αυτό, but ἀπιδωκα : not, I have lost it, but I have restor'd it, and return'd it to the right owner ; but thou wilt object (saith he) He is an ill man that has robbed me (κακος ο' αφελομενος) To which he answers, What is it to thee (τι δε σοι μελει) by what hand he that gives remands what he gave.

Henry.

§ It is an high strain of spiritualness in bearing afflictions, when a Christian can say, *I love to bear* : tho' I love not that which I suffer, and that

adversaries are, *the devil, the world, and self*; and each of these heap up crosses upon him—Devote a part of thy time this morning, to examine their different charges; and thereafter thou wilt easily see, that the Christian has ground of comfort treasured up in Christ, sufficient for his support, under them all.

What a restless and inveterate adversary is the devil! he accuseth the children of God, night and day; and sometimes has the daring assurance, even to accuse God to man. Thus, in paradise, he chargeth God with envy, in forbidding our grand parents to *eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, lest thereby they should become like God himself*; and in this trade of lying, Satan still continues. How frequently doth he reproach, first the goodness of God, by telling the lewd wretch, *that he may safely indulge any appetite or passion, however base and criminal it be reckoned or called, by men of refined morals or austere life, because God is the author of their frame, and hath planted every passion, with his own hand within them, and must, if he be wise and good, allow them to be gratified, with their several objects*; and after having attacked his goodness, he next proceedeth to reproach the justice of God, by insinuating to the lewd and licentious rake, *That though he sin he shall not die*. And by that means, he blows up the credulous creature, with the empty gales of presumption, and makes him believe that he is sinning securely! Sometimes he *falsely* lays charge against the mercy of God, and whispers into the ears of those, that are weak in faith; *that their*
sins

that which I bear, yet I love to bear what I suffer. But it is a higher pitch than this, to say with the apostle, *I rejoice in my sufferings*, Col. i. 24. For joy is a degree beyond love; yet is it a degree higher still, to take pleasure in reproaches and distresses for Christ's sake. 2 Cor. xii. 10. for pleasure is a degree beyond joy: but *to glory in tribulations*, is beyond them all; 'tis more than to love, more than to rejoice, more than to take pleasure in them.

Bar kilt.

sins are too great for God to pardon; and so endeavours to plunge them into the gulph of despondency and despair. Again he be-lies the providence of God, and says to those that are in indigency and want, *Surely the Lord hath cast you off, and will no more provide for you*; and thereby, he pushes many to stretch forth their hands to wickedness; and tempts them to set out, in the ways of unrighteousness.

He also accuses man to God——what an instance of his malice and impudence appears, in the case of *Job*! when the Lord commended his servant, Satan was ready to traduce him; and when he could not stain *Job*'s actions, he maligns his affections; he reproaches the upright man's intentions, as mercenary; he stages him, as an hireling, that worshipped God, *only* for his gifts, but not for himself. *Doth Job fear God for nought*?——But the result of the trial was, that *Job* is acquitted, and Satan is condemned, as a false and lying accuser.

Nor is the devil less active, in misrepresenting man to himself; he deceives the wicked by falsely suggesting, that they are the sons of God; and he perplexes the godly, with the apprehension of their being cast away, and utterly rejected. And indeed, there is no truth, however firmly established, but Satan is bold enough to doubt, to deny, and to call in question. He had the confidence to call in question our Lord's divinity——to say to Christ himself, *if thou be the Son of God*: and what will not the cunning deceiver venture to speak, and do to Christ's brethren?

How many are your trials from the world, believers? *Laban* searched narrowly *Jacob*'s stuff, to see whether he could get any thing, wherewith to charge him; but oftimes, more narrowly do wicked men search after the words, and deeds of the children of

God; seeking to accuse them, where they can find no ground. Upon the least shadow of suspected, fancied, or reported evil; nay, upon the least private surmise, how ready are they *maliciously* to traduce and reproach, without a cause? *Moses*, a man approved of God, was branded with the character of an usurper †; *Jeremiah*, although so passionate a lover of his country, that his soul mourned for its desolation, was yet accused of treason *; *Daniel*, a man beloved of God, was condemned, by *Darius's* counsellors as a rebel to the king †; the *Israelties*, who returned from the captivity, were charged by *Tabiah* and *Sanballat* with sedition §; nor were the primitive Christians less maliciously and unjustly oppressed, with opprobrious invectives, slanders and aspersions.

The tongues of wicked men are the ordinary weapons, which the devil first makes use of, against the godly; and indeed all that would desire to serve God, with a good conscience, may expect to be tried in this furnace. John xv. *Ye are not of this world, therefore the world hateth you.* And do the men of this world upbraid you, O expectants of heaven, with your former ways, the ways in which ye walked, before a work of conversion was begun, or carried on, in your hearts? Do they upbraid you with these sins, which God hath forgiven, though they will not forget? Let not their treatment break your Christian patience, since you are only charged with that, for which the Lord hath granted you a discharge. Be not therefore ashamed to proclaim your penitential acknowledgments; *True, I once was in such a deplorable state, but now I have obtained mercy; and so far as any will charge me with my pardoned sins, and my forgiven faults; so much the more will I magnify the Lord's rich*
grace

† Exod. ii. 14.

* Jer. xxxvii. 14, 15.

† Dan. vi. 13.

§ Nehem. ii 19.

grace towards me, and praise the physician that hath healed me.

It was but yesterday, I heard a child of God, falsely accused of what he never did, and probably never thought on.—How busy, how artful are the emissaries of Satan, to throw reproaches on Christ's disciples! and should I have the misfortune, to share in the like cruel language, beleched out against myself; take it as a monitor, O my soul—a monitor sent thee, to be ever watchful, and tender, in maintaining *a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards man*; and then need I never be afraid of the unrighteous judgment of froward and designing mortals. May the malicious and detracting tongues of the world, never interrupt my inward peace! Matth. v. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.*

What numberless trials arise to the Christian, from a deceitful and wandering heart *. How often does conscience itself accuse him? and although its charges may sometime arise, from a misinformation; yet does it not frequently also reprove, upon that clear light, which it hath from the infallible word of God? It is necessary, carefully to distinguish, betwixt the dictates of a conscience rightly informed, and the errors of a misinformed conscience: for where conscience discerns not, according to the law of the supream judge, it cannot but mistake, either in being over-large, and so pronoun-

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- * Oh wand'ring heart! Oh idly busy thing,
Ever abroad, and ever on the wing!
Pleas'd o'er a thousand barren wilds to roam
Rather than live with sweet content at home,
Yet less offensive would thy roving be
If from them were my serious moments free.

The wand'ring heart. A Poem.

cing these things lawful that are not so; or overstrait, in declaring that to be sinful, which, by the divine law, is declared lawful. How often does conscience disquiet the believer, by presenting to his view a full and clear discovery of these sins, which were long since pardoned, although the remembrance of them is continued in that conserving faculty, MEMORY. Conscience, charging home these, puts me in mind of thorns and briers, which, in the midst of a flower-garden, are extremely hurtful and pernicious, and crush the growth of the tender plant; but, in the hedge, they are profitable for its preservation. So sin, in the heart and affection, choaks the seed of God's word; but being dislodged of the heart, and retained in the memory, with evangelical sorrow, is like a hedge to preserve the soul, from these savage beasts, that would otherwise devour it.

Yes, the Christian may ever appear with a cheerful countenance: though the Lord HIMSELF should seem to frown, for a while; yet his loving kindness he will not take away, nor suffer the word that has gone out of mouth to fail. And how insignificant are all thy other enemies, my soul; how despicable the combinations and conspiracies, they can form against thee; if the Lord of hosts is on thy side?

If God be for us, who can be against us? True, so long as there is a cruel *Cain* in the world, there will be a suffering *Abel*; and while *Pharaoh* lives, poor *Israel* may expect oppression; wicked *Haman* will never look pleasantly, on old *Mordecai*; nor can the tender lily expect mercy, from the prickly thorn;—neither is the Christian to look for a riddance of every trial, in this place of his warfare; no, that is to be expected upon his reaching the heavenly paradise; on his arrival at Immanuel's land, where there is nothing but perfect peace, and uninterrupted

ted felicity for evermore †. While the Christian is sailing on his voyage, the waters of affliction may threaten, but can neither sink him, nor swallow him up; the flaming fire may possibly scorch, but cannot consume him; for when he passes thro' the devouring element, one like the SON OF MAN will attend him.

HAPPY the soldier that fights under JESUS! no antagonist can do him any fatal hurt.—If *Socrates* said of his enemies, *They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me*: And another, no less unacquainted with scripture revelation, being by the command of a tyrant, to be beat in a mortar to pieces; cried out, *Ye but beat the vessel, that contains the kernel*. (He accounted his body only as an husk, and looked upon his soul as the precious kernel :) How much more may the Christian give defiance to all the threats, and bravely encounter the utmost cruelty of his most merciless enemies! the gates of hell may possibly fight, and batter; but they shall never prosper, or prevail—Christ is the Christian's chieftain—Christ is always at the head of the believing army, and they need not fear, to carry the victory, who have such a glorious and potent prince, swaying the scepter of peace over them.

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† O paradise! O heavenly rest!

Of pious minds the blest repose:
Where true ambrosial sweets 'em feast,
And youth more blooming ever grows.

Where no disease, nor fretting pain,
Nor envy sour, nor bitter strife,
Nor any sorrows place obtain,
To pall the joys of perfect life.

—Oh could my soul, wing'd like a dove,
Take flight, to this fair *Eden* bent:
'Till I have reach'd these joys above,
I'll ne'er arrive at true content.

Paradise.

The mighty Lion of the tribe of *Judah*, is sufficient match for all his enemies, and is able, if they provoke his anger, to tear them into pieces; the Lord will ever take part with his church, and each member of his mystical body——God *himself* is on Zion's side; and therefore, until Zion's enemys can prevail against her God, they can never expect to prevail, against herself—Did Zion's shelters consist of walls of stone, they might be battered; or walls of lead, they might be melted; or a defence of waters, they might be drained up; or garrisons of valiant men, they might be scattered; or engines of war, they might be defeated; or strong bulwarks, they might be overthrown: but Zion's God is a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her.

What device against her will not omniscience discover? What assault is not omnipotence able to repel? And is there any glory befitting her, but the goodness of her God will ever bestow?—Hence *Balaam*, tho' otherwise a false prophet, yet reasoned fairly on this point, Num. xxiii. 8. *How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?*

How weak is the devil's power, when grace is the Christian's supporter! the wiles of Satan are then baffled, and cannot enslave the believer, to his enemies' will. Neither *Nebuchadnezzar's* royal decree, nor yet his furnace, hot seven times more than ordinary, could prevail with *Shadrach, Mesech, and Abednego*, to bow before his accursed idol, Dan. iii.—The rulers, scribes, pharisees, and elders of Israel, charged and commanded the apostles, that they should not speak any more, in the name of *JESUS*. *Acts* iii; but the fruit of the threatning was only this; that they departed from the council *rejoicing, and glorifying God*, that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. Nero, Domitian, Trajan, and the other
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persecuting Emperors strove in vain, to root out the principles, and professors of Christianity, even in the infancy of the New Testament church*; for, the more slaughter they made on the followers of the Lamb, so much the more did their number increase, and the cause of the Lord prospered.

Who

* The histories of these times furnish us with many memorable instances of this nature; by which the cruelty of persecution and the noble spirit of martyrdom is, at one and the same time, displayed—*Polycarp*, a famous champion for Christ, and disciple to *John*, being required by the proconsul to deny Christ, and assured, that thereupon he should be discharged, nobly replied, *Fourscore and six years have I been his servant, yet in all this time hath he not so much as once hurt me; how then may I speak evil of my King and sovereign Lord, which hath thus preserved me?*——Upon the proconsul's threatening him with fire, he said, *You threaten me with fire, which shall burn for the space of an hour, and shall be within a little after, put out and extinguished*——But *why make you all these delays? give me whatsoever death you please.* And indeed, when the fire was kindled about him, some of his church then present saw this marvelous thing; the fire, being like unto a vault or roof of an house, and after the manner of a shipman's sail filled with the wind, compassed about the martyr, as with a certain wall, and he in the middle of the same, not as flesh that burned, but as gold and silver when it is tried in the fire; they smelt also a savour so sweet, as if *myrrhe*, or some other precious balm had given a scent. When they saw that his body could not be consumed by fire, one thrust him through with a sword; which being done, so great a quantity of blood ran out of his body, that the fire was quenched therewith.

Another famous instance of Christian heroism, I shall mention, in the case of *Chrysostome*, who being severely threatened by the Empress *Eudoxia*, gave this answer; go tell her, *nil nisi peccatum timeo, I fear nothing but sin.* And after the sentence of banishment was passed against him, upon his going forth of the city he said, *None of these things trouble me; but I said within myself, if the Queen will, let her banish me; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; if she will let her cast me into the sea, I will remember Jonah; if she will, let her cast me into a burning fiery furnace, or among wild beasts, the three children and Daniel were so dealt with; if she will, let her stone me, or cut off my head, I have Stephen and the Baptist my blessed companions; if she will, let her take away all my substance, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither again.*

For more instances of this kind, See *Clarks martyrology*, and *Mull's hist. of marty. epitomized.*

Who shall separate us, says a sacred writer, *from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus?* Neither the pleasures of life, nor the pains of death; not trials felt, nor evils feared; not the height of prosperity, nor the depth of adversity; neither bonds, nor banishments; neither power, nor policy; no schemes of men, no devices of devils, can ever dissolve that firm relation, which subsists between Christ and the believer. Who is acquainted with these hours of sweet communion, which is the result of so happy an union, and would not cheerfully maintain it, either in *Daniel's* den, in *David's* desert, in *Jeremiah's* dungeon, or in the three *Children's* fiery furnace?

This intimate fellowship is pointed out, in scripture, by many excellent allusions; as that between a master and a servant, a father and a son, a bride and a bridegroom, a husband and a spouse, two dear friends, the head and the members, the root and the branches, the foundation and the building: but how faint are the strongest similitudes, to express the thing itself? Death separates betwixt the head and the members, the parent and the child, the husband and the wife, — death pulls asunder the dearest bosom friends, from the embraces of one another; the foundation and the house may be separate, the branches may be cut off from the vine; and the soul itself must depart from the body, for a season: ay, but God and the believer can never, never, never be separate, through all the revolving ages of an everlasting eternity †.

How sweet must that inward peace of conscience be,

† 'Tis said indeed 1 Cor. xv. 24. that there shall be a time, when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to his father; but the meaning is not, that ever he will cease to be an head to his saints, or they from being his members: no, no, the relation never ceases: justification, adoption, and sanctification are everlasting things, and the saints can never be divested of them.

be, which the Christian possesses, under his sorest trials ! 2 Cor. i. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.* As no lathes can be more dreadful, than these woeful stings, that are raised by the horrors of conscience, which rack with excessive anguish, and torture with unutterable agony; so no joy or peace, which this world affords, can ballance the serene tranquillity of a good conscience——In the times of greatest adversity, he who enjoys this precious repose, possesses a rich jewel, which the world can neither give him, nor take from him. A good conscience turns a wilderness into a paradise, poverty into riches, sickness into health, weakness into strength, bonds into liberty, and death into life. O how valuable this blessing ! It is a friend in the worst of times, a support under every difficulty, a sword to defend, a staff to bear up; a pillar of fire to lead, a Joseph to nourish, and a Canaan to refresh; *Prov. xv.* It is a continual feast; not for a day, as Nabal's was †; nor for seven days as Sampson's §; nor for nine score days as Ahazuer's †; but a perpetual feast of unexpressible satisfaction and solace——It was this made Moses prefer the cross of Christ, to the crown of Egypt; this made those noble worthies, recorded in *Heb. xi.* more desirous to die than to live †; this it was, that made the heroic army of martyrs, to kiss their

* Some of the ancient fathers (if I rightly remember) *Augustine* speaking of the Christian's peace of conscience, calls it, *Thalamus Dei, palatium Christi, habitaculum spiritus sancti.*

† 1 Sam. xxv. 39.

§ Judg. xiv. 12,

† Esther i. 4.

† The records of antiquity acquaint us with many such Christian heroes; and the two last centuries brought forth many instances of that nature, in the *British* isle-- The late, long and bloody persecution, in *Charles II.* and *James VII's* time, is full of the most shocking

their stakes, to sing in the flames and walk upon the burning coals, as if they had been a bed of roses. O what an invaluable jewel is this, which men and devils cannot deprive the Christian of!

How often has the Lord secured his people, in the day of trial; and protected them from the resentment of their enemies! Psal. xxvii. 5. *In the time of trouble, he hides them in his pavilion.* Yes, O my soul, all the followers of the Lamb are hid in God's decrees--they are hid in Christ's wounds--they are hid in the chambers of divine providence. Even, when dangers are universally threatening devastation, the watchman of Israel protects them, as *Noah* in the ark, *Lot* in Zoar, *Daniel* in the lions den, and *Jonah* in the whale's belly—The shepherd is never more careful of his flock, than when the lion threatens
to

unhuman and unparalleled barbarities, that possibly hell or earth could contrive; while a spirit of patience, meekness, courage and boldness in the cause of truth, appeared most remarkably, as in the lives, so at the deaths of these noble cloud of witnesses and martyrs for Christ. Let a few of their dying words bear witness to the truth thereof—
—Upon the marquis of *Argyle's* taking leave of his friends, and going out to the scaffold, he said, *Come away gentlemen, he that goes first, goes cleanliest*—Memorable is that saying of Mr. *James Guthrie*, upon his receiving sentence of death, *My Lords, may never this sentence more affect you, than it does me, and let never my blood be required of the king's family*—Captain *Govan*, in his last moments expressed himself thus, *The commissioner and I went out to the field together for one cause; I have now the cord about my neck, and he is promoted to be his majesty's commissioner, yet for a thousand worlds, I would not exchange lots with him, praise and glory be to Christ for ever*—That great and valiant soldier of JESUS Mr. *Donald Cargil*, when going up the ladder to his own execution, said, *The Lord knows, I go up this ladder with less fear and perturbation of mind, than ever I entered the pulpit to preach.*—And very remarkable were the words of that faithful and laborious servant of Christ, Mr. *James Renwick*, who upon hearing the drum beat, immediately before he was brought from goal to the scaffold, cry'd in a transport, *Yonder the welcome warning to my marriage, the bridegroom is coming, I am ready, I am ready, &c.*

See *Crookshanks list.*

to devour them, and the wolf lays snares to entrap them.

The Lord himself is the Christian's safeguard; and who can hinder his spiritual growth in grace, whom the Redeemer supplies, out of his own inexhaustable fulness? Naturalists observe, that fire casts the greatest heat, in the winter (by an *Antiperistasis*) because of the coldness in the surrounding air; as by the repulsion of external cold, internal warmth becomes invigorate; nor have divines had less occasion to observe, that, in the boisterous winter of a stormy persecution, the fire of a holy zeal, usually flames to the highest, and boils to the hottest pitch,——'Tis frequently under the dark cloud of persecution, that the saints' graces make the brightest, and most splendid appearance.

Chear up your hearts, ye heavenly champions, and let not your discouragements sink your spirits. Say not under your trials, *That, because of these, the Lord is departed from you*; For he is oftentimes nighest hand, when ye may apprehend him to be at a great distance. Gen. xxviii. 16. *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.* The dear saints of God frequently have the Lord's presence, remarkably supporting them, when they are not sufficiently affected with it. Job. ix. *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.* Oh! how dismal are the fruits of unbelief! it makes the disconsolate combatant, assumes to entertain hard notions of God, and harsh apprehensions of himself. A remarkable instance of this is afforded, in the case of Jonah, ii, ch. *I said, I am cast out of thy sight.* But how sudden were the triumphs of a vigorous faith! *Yet, I will look again towards thy holy temple.*

Under the trial, SENSE concludes a deliverance will never come; REASON affirms, that it cannot come;

come; ay, but faith soars above both, and refutes the objections of both sense and reason, with a heavenly confidence; telling them, in contrary terms, *It shall surely come.*—Does *Jonah* imagine that he is cast out of God's sight, and must inevitably plunge into the depth? FAITH, might have argued thus, 'I regard not the tremendous billows of a raging sea, I fear not the belly of hell, the whale's womb, where I now lie! am I concerned about the roaring waves, that now tumble and roll over me? No, as low and forlorn as I now am; tho' sense and reason should think my difficulties unsupportable and insurmountable; yet with a strong faith, I will look again to his holy temple, and be saved.' Beware then, O my soul, of building all thy comfort on sense. God may be favourably present with the inward man, when the outward man is severely dealt with. By mistaking this, many of the saints have given way to much doubting, not remembering, that the Lord's supporting presence upheld them, while his comforting presence could not be discerned by them. *Judg. vi. 12. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said to him, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour; and Gideon said, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us †?* when the love-sick-spouse is ready to faint, and to complain with the lamenting prophet, *Lam. i. 6. The comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far from me;*

† *The Lord is with thee*—The Targum here translates it, *The word of the Lord is thy help.* Whereby it appears, the ancient Jews did not look upon this angel, merely as an heavenly messenger sent from God, but as God himself.—*If God be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* Here the Targum makes Gideon's answer to have been this, *Is the SCHECHINAH of the Lord our help? Whence then hath all this happened unto us?* Which paraphrase shews that they took the word of the Lord to be the same with the SCHECHINAH of the Lord, who had most gloriously appeared for their help. Patrick.

me; then Christ her affectionate husband, doth incircle her with amicable entertainment; his left hand is under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her; when she begins to faint, her beloved puts in his hands under her——his hands that are softer than pillows of roses, and stronger than pillars of marble, to support and uphold her. Hence David says of the righteous man, Psal. xxxvii. 24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand**: and with the same inspired writer, may the disconsolate Christian join, in his reasoning, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

MEDITATION VIII.

On the Saints Heavenly Conversation upon Earth.

THE day is gone, the evening has stretched out its curtains over our hemisphere. How seasonable the opportunity that now offers, to examine the conversation I have had throughout the day! an exercise no less necessary, than delightful to the saints; whose *conversation is in heaven*! say then, my soul, has thy faith, thy hope, and thy love, been fixt on heavenly things? Thy thoughts, thy desires,
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* יהוה סומך ידיו *The Lord upholdeth with his hand*—Alluding to the tender care and concern, which an affectionate mother or nurse has, in carrying and supporting the weak and unwary child.

and thy affections been settled above? Hast thou been living in heart, will, and mind, under the laws of that heavenly city? An inspired writer exhorts all the disciples of Christ, Phil. i. 27. *Let your conversation be, as becometh the gospel.* It is thy unquestionable duty to walk every day, as becometh a citizen of the kingdom of God. 1 Pet. i. 45. *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*

Let it seem neither ridiculous, nor absurd, that the saints even while in the body, should have their conversation in heaven—where should the members be conversant, but where the head is? Where should the bride's affections be, but where the glorious bridegroom is, to whom her heart and soul is knit, by the strongest bond? Yea, beyond all peradventure, the saint will say to Christ, as Ruth said to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*

In a variety of respects, the saints maintain their conversation in heaven; are they not all aiming towards heaven, as their home? Is not the great scope, and the end of all their exercises, that they may be fitted for that glorious place, where the inhabitants cease not for ever, to glorify God and the Lamb, 2 Cor. iv. 18. *We look not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal**——As friends who converse

* *Μή σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα*—
The Greek word *σκοποῦντων* seems to allude to the practice of archers, who stedfastly look at the mark they shoot at; Thus the Christian's grand aim, and scope, in all his duties and exercises, is to look heavenward, while he sojourns here upon earth.—And indeed

verse together, act mutually for the comfort of one another ; so there is between Christ and the believer a mutual embracing, and opening of hearts, to each other. The saints *fellowship is with the father and with the son* ; there is a mutual acting of the soul upon Christ, and of Christ upon the soul : the believer is determined to surrender his heart to Christ, and Christ sets his heart upon the believer.

The saints conversation must needs be in heaven ; for 'tis his constant care to have his life squared, according to the institution and laws of heaven. How often does he reason thus, with himself ? ' The devil, the world, and the flesh ; are now attempting to engage me, in seeking the gratifications of my lusts ; but will the divine law justify my conduct therein ? Have I any warrant for compliance therewith, from Christ my Lord, my Saviour and my guide ? If not, how shall I do this, and sin against God ? Sometime ago indeed, my depraved nature, and the corrupt company of the world, were the only rule of my walk and conversation ; yes, but now the case is altered since I became acquainted with Christ ; tho' I now live on earth, yet my husband and my treasure is in heaven ; by his laws am I guided, by his spirit directed, by his grace changed, and I dare act nothing, but according to the sceptre and will of my beloved.'

How soaring are the believer's thoughts and medi-

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ons !

There's nothing earthly can allure his mind

Who keeps an heaven in view ;

Who with ambition unconfin'd

A bliss unbounded does pursue.

Lay crowns and scepters at his feet,

Let riches, pleasures, honours wait,

And fondly court his smile :

He'd scorn the charms of things so vain,

Spurn them away with just disdain,

Nor count them worth his while.

Contempt of the world.

rations! they cannot centre in any object, until they reach heaven itself. It was an excellent saying of David, *when I awake, I am still with thee* †——And indeed, his heart cannot miss to be where his treasure is. How small a space of time can pass, but he must have some sweet converse with heaven, some reflexions upon heaven and heavenly things!—says an apostle, *If ye then be risen with Christ—set your affection, on things above, and not on things on the earth* ‡. Our affections are precious, and ought therefore to be set upon precious objects: what a shame is it for any of Christ's soldiers, to set their affections on the perishing things of a world; since we have a gracious God, a soul-satisfying Christ, a kingdom of glory, thrones of glory, robes of glory, scepters of glory, palms of glory, and a heaven that is full of glory, to set our hearts upon, and which the saints shall without interruption enjoy, when their short night of affliction is turned to an eternal day of joy and delight? how unbecoming is it for an heir of heaven to glue his heart to dung, dross and vanity, while CHRIST his king is demanding it!—Nay, my soul, tho' this crazy body is grovelling along the coasts of mortality; be it thy business, to support a spiritual traffick with heaven——Not for trifles, or perishing things, but for the pearl of great price, for God himself, for matchless Christ, and for eternal glory. —The price of purchase is the invaluable blood of Jesus; do thou claim it by faith; for a Redeemer's blood is of infinite worth, to purchase all thou canst desire, or stand in need of.

Must not the saints have their conversation in heaven; since they are the workmanship of the God of heaven? Their bodies are indeed of the earth, earthly; but the soul is a heavenly substance, brought into being by the breath of the almighty, Gen. ii. 7.

God

† Psal cxxxix. 19.

‡ Col. iii. 1. 2.

God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul.—The human soul is of a noble extract and original, although by our woe-ful apostacy in the first of men, the soul as well as the body is become polluted, and all its faculties overspread with natural corruption. And when the Lord works grace in the heart, the soul then begins to know its own pedigree, and looks on all things below as vile and corruptible, as too mean for such an excellent being to take up with †. Then it begins to soar aloft, and contemplate things suitable to itself; like a child that is of royal birth and progeny, if transported into a foreign kingdom, and there used, as a slave, to rake conduits; while he remains there, and knows not his own original, he minds nothing, but to go about slavish and servile work; to feed upon husks, and among the swine; but when once he comes to know, that he is descended from so noble a family, that he is heir to such a king, and prince of such a kingdom; oh, what a change and alteration immediately commences in his thoughts, affection and mind; he then begins to think of the rich entertainment that is in father's house; and is ready to cry out, 'O that I were in mine own country, and at my father's court; but even while I am on the way home, I must take care, that my conversation and deportment

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' be

† ——— For from the birth

Of mortal man, the sovereign Maker said,
' That not in humble or in brief delight,
' Not in the fading echoes of renown,
' Pow'r's purple robes, or pleasure's flow'ry lap,
' The soul should find enjoyment: but from these
' Turning disdainful to an equal good,
' Through all th' ascent of things enlarge her view,
' Till ev'ry bound at length should disappear,
' And infinite perfection close the scene.

Akenside's pleasures of imag.

‘ be such, as becometh my father’s son.’——Thus it is with the souls of men; they came from the hand of God the great king of heaven, pure and holy; and although by the fall, they became slaves to sin; yet when the Lord begins a work of conversion in the soul, then the man discerns its noble original, and may be supposed thus to accost himself, ‘ Yes I am from on high, this noble——this immortal soul is capable of communion with its Maker, both here and hereafter: why then should I set my heart on earthly things? Let my conversation be in heaven, from whence I look for a Saviour.’

Believers, are not your best and most precious jewels in heaven; and where then can your conversation possibly be? Yes, your *father* is in heaven, your *Saviour* is in heaven; thither he hath ascended, and sits at the right hand of God; the *Spirit*, that sanctifies you, is in heaven; your *husband* is in heaven; your *elder brother* is in heaven; your *king* is in heaven; your *treasure* is in heaven; and all that your souls long for, is in heaven; and why should not your conversation be there also?

You are marching towards heaven, even while you sojourn upon earth; heaven is the place that ere long, ye will possess ‡! in this world ye are to remain only for a while, but heaven will be the place, of your residence and abode for evermore, 1 Thess. iv. 17. *Ye shall be caught up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and shall be eternally with him,*

- ‡ May the Spiritual life still be my care:
Tow’rds thee my GOD, and CHRIST my Saviour dear,
May my affections daily wing their way,
Till dying, thus, I shall be heard to say,
‘ I travel not, now in an unknown road,
‘ This is the path which oft before, I’ve trod:
‘ I go to GOD, to JESUS! I go home:
‘ The welcome, long expected hour is come.’

him, in heaven—Here you travel from strength to strength, until every one of you appear before God in Zion. Nay, the Lord discovers much of heaven to the saints, even in this valley of tears, *Luke xvii. 21.* The kingdom of heaven is within them; and thereby they know, that they have a better and more enduring substance, than this world can afford them.

Here must I indeed resolve to reside, until my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved; but know, my soul, this is no continuing city, thou must look for one to come, *a city not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God.* An emblem of thy transitory abode here was early given, in the case of the ancient patriarchs, who dwelt in tents; counting themselves pilgrims on earth, guests that were only to lodge in an inn*, for a night—This world is but a shade of mortality, where the ungodly, who fulfill their lusts, swarm like so many grasshoppers, about the saints. No wonder then, that the apostle groaned in spirit, and desired to depart, and be with Christ. O happy journeyers! who are set out for the glorious place where Jesus dwells, and happy they, who, while they go forward themselves, embrace every opportunity to direct others on the way! oh, that my pen might drop a word, this evening, that could be, not only useful to my self, but a mean of help and assistance to my fellow-travellers, on the road!

Why then, who ever would maintain a heavenly

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con-

* The church militant, the place of the saints abode here below, is as an inn in several respects, as (1.) An inn is set apart for that very purpose, and distinguished from other houses of entertainment; so the church is selected from the rest of the world, *Numb. xxiii. 9.* *Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations,* (2.) An inn stands in some open place, that it may be obvious to every passenger; so the church is like a *city built upon an hill.* (3.) However open to publick view an inn stands, yet can it not be discerned by

conversation upon earth, must, on his journey, improve all seasons for heavenly exercises. With how much warmth does a prophet, speaking in the Lord's name, call men to this? Isa. lv. 13. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation*——While Christ's heraulds are calling, and men are living under the droppings of this heavenly language; O that they would now improve it!—Let such as have hitherto disregarded heaven's entreaties, in the ministry of the word—Let them now hearken to wisdom's voice, which cryeth in the openings of the gate, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*——*Unto you, O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.* Yes, O triffler, Christ Jesus is yet calling, mercy is still entreating, love is beseeching, patience is inviting; Oh then be per-

by a blind man even in the day time; and the most wary and noticing traveller may lose sight of it, in a dark and cloudy night; so unregenerate men (who are spiritually blind) cannot discern the beauty of the church, in her most flourishing seasons; and sometimes she is so overclouded, as to outreach the sight of *Elijah*, who could not see one but himself, when the Lord had seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to *Baal*. (4) An inn is a place of entertainment for persons of different orders and rank; so in the church are some of the different nations and characters in the world; *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Gal. iii. 28. (5) An inn is a place where men lodge only for a night, and resolve not to make a long abode in; so this world is a place, in which men are but as strangers and pilgrims; 'tis not the saints home, from hence they will quickly pass, and leave the church militant, to join that blessed society of the church triumphant abbove, there to live and reign for ever and ever.

persuaded, to lay hold on this opportunity, lest another such should never again offer.

How hurtful to a heavenly conversation, is the resting in a formality of duties! many under the common enlightnings of conscience, may be stirred up to go a round of external duties; who, thro' the suggestions of Satan, and the corruption of nature, are instantly tempted to think and say, *Now my duty is done, my task is over, and what needs more!* Ah man, what hast thou done? unprofitable servant! thou hast not done the half, nor the thousandth part, of what thou oughtest to have done! where hast thou been! hath thy soul been in heaven with God? Hast thou had any communion and intercourse with the father, and the son, and holy Ghost in thy duties? Oh, beware of formality, beware of resting upon external performances. How necessary is it for the Christian, to interrogate himself, after holy exercises—'My heart, wast thou in heaven, when my knees were bowed at prayer, and my lips opened in praise? My affections, were ye in heaven, when I heard such a sermon? My desires, were ye soaring and flying upward after Christ, when the minister so warmly recommended him?' Such enquiries, after every duty, might be helpful means, to support a heavenly conversation upon earth.

See JESUS, who was lately hanging on the cross, now sitting on the throne——Behold him, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. xii. 2.——

—Christ on the cross, and Christ on the throne, are the objects which the saints earnestly desire to behold; and indeed, as the one points him out to be the *author*, so the other manifests him to be the *finisher*

finisher of our faith †. He loved us, and gave himself for us, a sacrifice on the cross; and he has promised to him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. And will not a sight of Christ's cross, and a sight of Christ's throne elevate the saints affections, and make their conversation heavenly?

Nor is it less necessary, O my soul, to observe the motions of the holy Spirit, and to follow after the dictates thereof; for this end, Christ ascended up on high, that he might send the Comforter, and that the influences of the heavenly Dove might bring many souls to salvation. Yea, this is the very living principle, by which men must move or ascend heavenward. Beware then, O beware of quenching its motions, or resisting its operations ‡.

Take heed, my soul, of suffering thyself to be too deeply entangled, with the things of this world—A heavenly conversation, and an immoderate groveling after earthly pursuits, are so stated opposites; that

† Ἀρχηγὸς καὶ τελειωτὴς πίστεως, *Dux et consummator fidei*, non tantum merito, sed et efficacia, quia, ut est Author fidei, est etiam ejus conservator, qui illum verbo et spiritu in nobis productam, confirmat perservantiae dono et tuetur adversus omnes tentationes, et tandem perficit et complet gloriae et immortalitatis corona.

Turretin:

‡ 'Tis a divine command, *Quench not the spirit*. Thess. v. 19.—There is much elegance in the metaphor; as fire is enlightning, warming, and consuming; so the spirit is compared to the fire, in these and other respects, it enlightens the understanding, warms the affections, and destroys the corruptions in the heart. How dangerous and iniquous must it then be, to neglect, suppress, or quench the motions of the holy spirit; and thereby set ourselves in opposition to the current of divine grace; and for which the Lord was, in former ages, provoked to utter the awful threatening, Lev. xxvi. *And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues according to your sins.*

that, the one is a plain evidence of our adoption, among the sons of God; while the other testifies, that we are yet strangers to grace; 1 John ii. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.*

Get up, O ye fortunate travellers; and, while on your journey, appear as champions of heaven, wrestling against all the assaults of the devil; that until you have finished your warfare, ye may continue stedfast, and even on your thorny way, may join in your meditations, with that noble soldier, who has long since got the victory, but in the day of his warfare said, 2 Cor. iv. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed.*——Thus, by shewing yourselves such valiant soldiers, ye will demonstrate, that ye walk not simply as men, but as men of God, and warriors of heaven—ye must look for fightings without, and wrestlings within, while on your road; and indeed, if ye wanted such trials and chastisements, it would be a sign that ye were bastards, and not sons, *Heb. xii. 8.* Take unto you therefore, the panoply—the compleat armour of God; by which ye will be sure to quit yourselves like men, and to quench all the fiery darts of the devil——Though ye should suffer for a little, yet must ye again set out, until, with *Michael*, ye prevail against this bloody dragon, that now strives to tempt and distress you.

With what just propriety is the saints conversation compared, to men walking on a journey—They walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, *Rom. viii. 1.* There is an analogy between the saints living, and a traveller's waiking.

Some travellers are ignorant of the road, and inquire for the best, the safest, and the nearest way; so,

so, if the christian inquires for the way of merit, it is Christ; if for the rule of obedience, it is the law; and if he would shun many by-paths, and dangerous ways, he must search the Scriptures—Travellers desire to have good companions on the journey; they are loath to go alone, and yet more so, to travel with bad company, as thieves, robbers &c; so the christian must beware of dangerous companions; *for evil company corrupts good manners* ‡. Oh how wary must the saint be, lest he come to suffer by the company of common swearers, drunkards, lyars, whoremongers, sabbath-breakers, self-righteous ones, and all who would pervert the gospel of Christ; these will strive to turn him aside from the straight way; and therefore whoever would prosecute a journey heavenward, had need to make up his acquaintance with the saints, *the excellent ones of the earth*. Travellers want much a good and sure guide, thro' an unhospitable wilderness; so does he that would safely travel to heaven, thro' this deceitful world; and as two guides, the flesh and the spirit, will offer themselves unto him, he had need to be wise and cautious in his choice; the *eunuch* understood not, without an interpreter, *Acts* 8. nor will the christian walk without a guide; and it is the spirit that opens up the mysteries of the word of God.

Travellers don't clogg themselves with superfluous and unnecessary burdens, but carry *only* what is requisite for their journey; nor must the christian over-

‡ It was one of the rules of Epictetus' Philosophy, 'Decline all publick entertainments, and mixed companies; but if any extraordinary occasion call you to them, keep a strict guard upon yourself, lest you be infected with rude and vulgar conversation; for know, that though a man be never so clear himself, yet by frequenting company that are tainted, he will of necessity contract some pollution from them.'

verload himself with the unnecessary cares and concerns of this world, otherwise he will obstruct his own progress, and retard his motion on the road.— The traveller provides himself in good weapons, in case of danger by the way; so must the Christian, whose ordinary weapons are a sword, and a staff: and *faith* serves for both. The road to heaven is hedged in, with many dangers and difficulties; in some corner or other, the spiritual travellers will not readily fail to meet with that implacable adversary the devil, who labours incessantly to take from them that stock of grace, which supplies them on their way to glory; and the best weapon wherewith to fight him, is faith. Faith also serves for a staff, to rest upon. 1 *John* 5. 4. *This is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith.*— Faith is a weapon offensive, *Jam.* 4. 7. *Resist the devil, and he will fly from you.* 'Tis likewise defensive, *Eph.* 6. 16. *Above all take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Faith is to the believer, what the nurse's hand is to the tender infant. An aged infirm man will not venture to stir without doors, wanting his staff; so, without faith, the Christian could never hold out, on his journey to heaven: while *Peter* kept faith in his heart, he walked safely on the waters; but when that began to fail, he began also to sink, and faint.

Travellers that walk on foot, had need to have their feet guarded, lest being wounded by the sharpness of stones, or thorns, they be obliged to halt by the way; so, the heavenly journeyer, being to tread upon thorns and burning coals, must have his feet shod with *the preparation of the gospel of peace*, *Eph.* 6. 15. Firmly resolved thro' grace, that come fire or sword, he will steer forward in his course. *Pf.* 119. *I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*— Travellers carry a-
long

long provisions and cordials, to cheer them up, in case of fainting on the road; so, when the believers spirits begin to languish, the waters of life, and the floods of evangelical repentance are excellent cordials to recover them; and to confirm his resolution and assurance.—Travellers must not rest any longer, than what is necessary for their refreshment, in *inns* or other places by the way; nor must the believer stand gazing around him, on the things of this world, lest the Lord reprove him and say, *Why stand ye here, all the day idle?* No, he must be ever pressing forward, on his heavenly journey, *Rejoycing to run the race, that is set before him.*—Travellers will be frequently calculating, how much of the way they have made; and by that means will know, how diligent they have been on the journey; so, the christian is often employed, in taking a retrospect view of his bygone time, and inquiring, how it has been improved; and, the more he has loitred away of the past part, the greater need he has to double diligence, in time to come, and to be importunate in crying, with the inspired Psalmist, *Lord, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom* † *Pf. 90.*

Go on, my soul, *leaning upon thy beloved* * —
press

† Since we can die but once, and after death
Our State no alteration knows,
But when we have resign'd our breath,
Th' immortal spirit goes
To endless joys; or everlasting woes:
Wife is the man who labours to secure
That mighty and important stake;
And, by all methods strives to make
His passage safe, and his reception sure.

Pomfret.

* This scripture phrase is applied to the Spouse Cant. 8. 5. *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning [according to the LXX confirming or strengthening herself] upon her beloved; and is opposed to that*

press forward on thy heavenly journey; and give no more of thy affections to earthly objects, than the traveller does of his, to the different countrys and towns he passes through; but let thy heart be ever set on thy native home. 'Hast thou hitherto been too much cumbered, about a multiplicity of worldly concerns; and thy weakness yielded too much, to assaulting temptations; have thy affections been divided betwixt heaven and earth?' Yet, the very sensible feeling of thine own weakness and infirmity, the real knowledge and hearty acknowledgement of so much, is a good evidence. It was the saying of an eminent traveller, *Pf. 32. 5. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* He who opens the eyes to behold, and the heart to acknowledge thy sinful imperfections, is also gracious, and ready to pardon, for his own Son's sake — Hast thou felt but the very seeds and beginnings of saving grace? he that hath begun a good work will not fail to perfect it, until the day of our Lord *Jesus Christ*; he will cause these holy seeds, to bring forth their fruit, in due season. Go on then, and prosper in thy journey; and may the mighty God of Jacob, be with thee!

Oh miserable! unspeakably miserable the man, whose conversation is leading him to the pit of eternal ruin, and destruction! stop, sinner, stop thy career, if thou art wise, before it be too late — Now, art thou walking after the flesh, despising the law, and authority of heaven, yielding thyself captive to the law of sin, resting thy affections on things below,

that of leaning to our own understanding *Prov. iii. 5.* And indeed, although the believer has no strength of his own to prosecute his heavenly journey; yet in a dependence upon him, who is the power of God, and the strength of Israel, he may go on cheerfully, saying with Paul, *I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me.*

below, and never minding things that are above; and this course of thine testifys, that thou hast never set out, on the road to heaven; and the way in which thou walkest will inevitably lead thee to hell, if thou persevere on thy present road. Therefore I counsel thee, sinner, to yield up thy self to be ruled and governed by him, of whom thou hast hitherto been saying, *we will not have this man to reign over us.*

Ye have made choice of him, believers; ye have taken Christ for your prophet to lead you, your priest sacrificed for you, and your king to govern you; unto you then, O expectants of heaven, I proclaim peace in his name—peace with God, Father, Son, and holy Ghost; which in the language of inspiration, is called *Reconciliation*, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by grace, ye have peace with God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Peace with all the angelical tribes; who are ministring spirits, *Sent forth to minister unto them, who shall be heirs of salvation. Heb. 1. 14.*—Be at peace then, O ye saints, be at peace among your selves; before ye believed, ye were like wolves or cocatrices, but now ye belong to Christ's peaceable kingdom; therefore put off savage nature, and maintain peace, one with another; this peace was prefigured, by that of the wild and tame beasts dwelling together. *Isa. xi. 6. 9. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cocatrices den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,*

tain. †— And 'tis recorded of the new Testament saints, *Acts 4. 32. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul.*

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon thee. *Isa. 26. 3.*—Let my soul be stayed upon him—upon him, before whom the mountains melt away, and the rocks dissolve at his presence. Let my desires be ever sent out in a holy submission to him, whose providence extendeth itself to every being, and wisely ordereth all the states and conditions of life, and makes the whole to conspire, in a sacred harmony, to promote the believer's journey—even a tree loseth not a leaf, the air loseth not a bird, nor can the head lose a single hair, without a permission from the supreme Ruler of the universe †——oh, that every of the Lord's saints would copy the pattern of old Eli; who, under a smarting rod, expressed his submissive sentiments *1 Sam. 3. It is the*

I Lord,

‡ The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
 And boys in flow'ry banks the tyger lead;
 The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
 And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
 The smiling infant in his hand shall take
 The crested basilisk and speckled snake;
 Pleas'd the green lustre of the scales survey,
 And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.

The MESSIAH In Imita. of Virg. Poëta.

† This doctrine of divine providence, which concerns itself about the meanest creature, is preached by our Lord, and used as an argument with his disciples, to fortify their minds against distracting cares or slavish fears. *Matth. 10. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father.* ver. 30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbred. — *Epicurus, Diagoras, &c.* and their insatiate adherents fell into the most absurd and extravagant notions concerning providence; looking upon it as below the notice of the Divine Majesty, to have the government of every the most abject creature, in his own hand, they concluded that all sublunary things were managed by a blind goddess, fortune, chance, or stoical fate. This heathenish goddess (*Fortune*) was represented by the image of a woman, sitting sometimes upon a ball, and sometimes upon a wheel,

Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. How soon, ye saints, would such an holy disposition of mind dry up all the tears, stay all the sighs, and suppress all the murmurings, that often attend you on your heavenly journey!

Whence that restless disquietude, which prevails among the wicked, in their different situations of life; but because their minds are not stayed upon God?

a wheel, having with her a razor, bearing in her right hand the stem of a ship, and in her left hand the horn of abundance: by the razor they gave her blind votaries to understand, that, at her pleasure she can cut off, and end their happiness or prosperity: by the ball or wheel, that she is very prone to volubility and change; by the stem in her right hand, that the whole course of their lives was under her government; and by the horn of abundance in her left hand, that all our plenty is from her.—Yet this gross and palpable idolatry of the Gentiles was disclaimed, by the wiser among them, as most ridiculous and absurd; and testimonies for a divine providence may be gathered from the writings of *Plato, Cicero, Aristotle, Seneca* &c. the last of whom viz. *Seneca lib. 2. Nat. Qu. cap. 45.* calleth God *Custodem, rectoremque universi, animum et spiritum, mundani hujus operis dominum et artificem. cui nomen omne convenit. Vis illum fatum vocare, non errabis. Hic est, ex quo suspensa sunt omnia, causa causarum. Vis illum providentiam dicere? recte dices. Est enim hujus concilio huic mundo providetur, ut in concussus eat, et actus suos explicet.*—— But christians have a more sure word of prophecy, and there we find the superintendency, rule, and dominion of the universe, ascribed only to GOD. However accidentally the fish, that swallowed *Jonah*, may seem to have arrived to that place; the scriptures assure us, that the Lord had prepared a great fish, for that very end, *Jonah 1. 17.* And concerning the storm which drove the pilots to their extremity, the prophet himself saith *Chap. 1. ver. 12* *I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you—* However contingently the fish which *Peter* took, might seem to come to the angle, yet he brought in his mouth the tribute money, which *Peter* paid for his Lord, and for himself, *Math. 17-27.*—— However accidental it might seem, that, when *Joseph's* brethren were reasoning among themselves how to dispatch him, the merchants who bought him, then passed by, yet, says *Joseph* himself afterwards unto his brethren, *It was not you that brought me hither, but God. Gen. 48. 8.* But (not to multiply instances of this kind) what can appear more casual than lottery? yet *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 16. 33.* *The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*

God? Ye men of wisdom and learning, who are perpetually ploding, on philosophic themes—your study is truly valuable; but whence is it, that all your parts and proficiencies cannot dispell your many anxious, and fretting cares? because your conversation is not in heaven. — Ye men of riches and honour, that possess immense fortunes, and yet are still insatiably thirsting after more — either the objects ye pursue are not proportionable to the soul, as sound is to the ear, and collour to the eye; or else, these objects are unable to equalize the desires of your immortal souls; you are ever restless, till this, that, or the other project is set about, and no sooner is one dispatched, than another hurrys on. — True, a becoming industry in your worldly business, is not to be checked but recommended; but if, indeed, ye would expect to prosper, haste, oh haste to enrich yourselves, with the pearl of great price — ye children of poverty, come here, and have all your wants supplied, there is enough for you also.

Be it thy constant business, O my soul—be it thy important concern, first to seek the kingdom of heaven, and then all things else will be added thereunto: and while I'm pursuing a heavenly conversation, may my desire and delight be, to have the expectants of glory, as my daily companions, and Christ himself as my only sure and infallible guide. Amen and Amen.

MEDITATION IX.

On the Resurrection of the Dead.

THE sun has lifted up his head, and now diffuses his splendid rays. But lo, the sun of righteousness will ere long appear, to summon every one to answer, at his tremendous tribunal: and then every grave must surrender its prisoner.— And will this crazy body lodge for a while in the grave? Yes, only for a while, and not for ever, shall the grave retain its prisoner. The dead shall be raised up, — The wicked must arise, to receive an irrevocable doom of horror and misery; and, the bodies of the saints shall arise, out of their long sleep in the dust. How surprising is it, that ever men have been stupified into such a delusion, as to deny a resurrection of the dead! how is it possible to conceive of that glorious change, which will be wrought upon the bodys of the saints, if they were not to be raised up? *Job. 19. 25, 26. I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth. And tho' after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Dan. 12. 2. Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. John 5. 28, 29. The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.*

How clearly is this truth taught, by the supreme judge himself? *Matth. 22. 31, 32. Christ reasoned thus*

thus against the *Sadducees*, * who, among other of their errors, deny a resurrection, *Have ye not read what God himself said, I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; † God is not God of the dead, but of the living.* Well, but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob live in spirit, tho' their bodies sleep in the grave, and ere long they will live in body also. — How nervous is the argument of an eminent apostle, on this topic ! 1 Cor. 15. 12. *If Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead ?* The consequence of this is obvious ; for Christ rose not as a private person ; but he arose, as the first fruits of those that slept. — Again, if there was not a resurrection of the dead, which must antecede the glori-

I 3

fication

* The Sadducees were a sect among the Jews who received only the PENTATEUCH, but no other books of Scripture as canonical ; they denied the being of angels and spirits, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. — Mr. Lamy says of them, that the true reason why they rejected the other books of Scripture, was because they could not entertain those opinions, if they once admitted them to be canonical ; in as much as the *prophets* contradict them in every article. They took their name from Saduc, the disciple of Antigonus Socha, who lived, according to the Jewish calculation, about three hundred years before the birth of JESUS CHRIST. — But D. Prideaux places the rise of this sect Anno 263 before Christ ; and thinks it most probable, that a dissoluteness of manners gave rise to it, and not the reasonings of Sadoc upon the doctrines of *Antigonus*.

† Those to whom almighty God pronounceth himself a God, are alive ; but God pronounceth himself a God to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, many hundred years after their bodies were dead ; therefore their souls are yet alive, federally alive unto God : their covenant relation lives still, otherwise God could not be their God ; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living. If one relation fails, the other necessarily fails with it ; if God be their God, then certainly they are in being, for God is not the God of the dead ; that is, of those that are utterly perished. Therefore it must needs be, that altho' their bodies be naturally dead, yet do their souls live still, and their bodies shall also live again at the resurrection of the just.

Burk.

fication of the saints bodies ; then, it would follow, that in this life the saints had only hope in Christ ; but this is absurd, *for (says Paul) if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

Be watchful then, O my soul, in waiting and looking for the second appearance of the Lord JESUS CHRIST ; who will raise the dead out of their graves, and will change the bodies of his saints, and prepare them for entering into their eternal inheritance : — an inheritance which God the father hath prepared, God the Son hath purchased, and God the holy Ghost hath sealed unto them. Yes, ye expectants of heaven, tho', for a time, death will seize you, as its prisoner ; and the grave must be the house of your abode ; yet the day is a coming, when he *who liveth and was dead, and is alive, for evermore, and has the keys of hell and death,* Rev. 1. 18. will raise your bodies far more glorious than ever they were, before you made your beds in the solitary grave. — The dead bodies of God's saints have been sometimes given as meat to the fowls of the air ; and their flesh to the beasts of the earth, or fishes of the sea. Pl. 79. 2. *Yet precious in the Lord's sight is the death of his saints ;* and, one day, he will command every corner of the world to give up its dead ; at which time, the glorious angels shall gather together the elect, from the four winds, and from the one end of heaven to the other ; and then shall this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, when the dead are all raised, by the tremendous sound of the last trumpet.

Oh, how many complaints have the saints *now*, of their own bodies ! how subject and lyable they now are to numberless infirmities, miseries, mortality and corruption, daily experience doth abundantly illustrate. How many are the complaints of
aches,

aches, pains, and diseases, that now affect our tottering tabernacles of clay! how soon are they cut down like grass, and wither like the green herb! and, when God blows out this little warm breath, and vapour of life; how suddenly do they moulder into their original dust! nor can the bodies of such as are descended of noble families, honourable parentage, or of royal blood, expect to be exeemed from bearing a share with others: * hence the language of inspiration speaks, *All flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away,* 1 Pet. 1. 24. May this apostolick intimation happily check the vain glory of proud mortals. How many alas, make it their only business, to adorn a vile carcase, with the gaietys of dress; while the sole ambition of others, is only to satiate a greedy appetite, with the most delicate food †! how careful are such, that their bodies be not exposed to the cold, for a meal of the gospel to their souls! for them 'tis commonly too hot in summer, to be scorched with the sun beams; and too cold in winter, to be beat upon by the storm.

I 4

These

* Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your pow'rs;
The tall, the wise, the rev'rend head
Must lie as low as ours.

Watts.

† Their various cares in one great point combine,
The business of their lives, that is — *to dine*.
Half of their precious day they give the feast,
And, to a kind *digestion*, spare the rest.
— These worthys of the palate guard with care
The sacred annals of their *bills of fare*,
In those choice books their panegyricks read,
And scorn the creatures that for hunger feed.
If man by *feeding well* commences great,
Much more the worm, to whom that man is meat.

Young.

These bodies, that are now most delicately fed and gorgeously clothed, are oftentimes least busied, in travelling to places, where spiritual supplies are to be had; while the fatigued limbs of such, as earn their bread with the sweat of their brow, sail in raggs to the temple of God, and are satisfied with such provision, as heaven sees most profitable to their souls. But how suddenly will the scene change! the saints, mean and despicable as they may appear, in the eyes of the world, are looking for the coming of a saviour, who will change their vile bodies, at the resurrection of the dead.

And are ye waiting, believers, with a joyful expectation, for Christ's second coming? I'm surprized not, that ye are both looking, and longing for the happy day, in which your souls and bodies shall meet, never again to complain, one of another, nor to be separate thro' all eternity. An apostle tells us *That the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God.* Rom. 8. 19. *Now are we the sons of God, it doth not yet appear, what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* 1 John 3. 2. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear; then shall ye also appear with him in glory,* Col. 3. 4.

How earnestly did the patriarchs, prophets, and all the old Testament saints long for the coming of that blessed seed of the woman, the star of Jacob, the prince of peace, the righteous branch, Emmanuel God with us. They rejoiced, in the faith of his coming in the flesh; Abraham saw his day afar off, and was glad. John 8. 56. 'Many prophets and kings have desired to see these things, which ye have seen, and did not see them, and to hear these things which ye have heard, and have not heard them.'—With what

what warmth did old Simeon † embrace Christ, when he said, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* It ravished the aged man's heart, to see his saviour come in the flesh. Oh how unutterably joyful, will it then be to the saints, to see him coming, in his heavenly glory, and to hear the voice of the trumpet, sounding before him, **ARISE, YE DEAD, AND COME TO JUDGMENT.** * The shepherds and the wise men greatly rejoiced, to see the blessed babe

† It was revealed unto this devout man, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Luke 2. 26. — "Some are of opinion, that this Simeon was the son and successor of Hillel, a very famous doctor in the Jewish church before our saviour's time, and that he was either the father or master of Gamaliel, at whose feet St. Paul was educated. But, (besides that, we can hardly suppose, how a person of this note could make so publick a declaration in favour of our Lord, and yet, no more notice be taken of it) if we look into the several revelations, which God, at this time, was pleased to give of his son, we shall find, that none of these were directed to any of the Pharisees, or principal doctors of the law, but that to Joseph a carpenter, to Zacharias an ordinary priest, and to a company of poor shepherds, such discoveries were made: and therefore, it is much more reasonable to presume, that this Simeon, to whom God had revealed the time of Christ's coming, was some honest plain man, more remarkable for his piety and devotion, than any other quality or accomplishment. When he came into the temple, 'tis said, that among the other mothers, who brought their children to be presented to the Lord, he observed the holy virgin all shining with rays of light, and that, putting the multitude aside, he went directly to her, gave her his blessing, took the child JESUS in his arms, and being divinely inspired, pronounced the canticle, *Nunc dimittis.* Nicephorus relates, that, as soon as he returned the child to his mother, he died; and Epiphanius adds, that the Hebrew priests refused to give him burial, because he had spoken of our Saviour with too much advantage. But these traditions may be grounded on fictions. — Pole's annotations, Calmet's commentary, and dictionary under the word Simeon.

See Stackhouse's hist :

* I heard a shout, with th'archangel's voice,
And trump of God, which shook the earth, and sea,
And tore hell's concave, such a peal, as rous'd
The dead from their long sleep, who from the dust,

babe Jesus, with *Joseph* and *Mary*; and must it not be a transcendently delightful sight to the saints, to behold him attended with thousands and ten thousands of angels, riding triumphantly upon the clouds for his chariots? it is matter of joy to have the sting of death removed, and a victory over the grave obtained; and shall it not be much more so, to have a final exemption both from death and the grave, never to see corruption any more?

Yes, believers, after ye have slept in the dust, for a time; Christ, who broke asunder the bars of death, and the fetters of the grave, will raise up, by his mighty power, your vile bodies, that they *may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body*. † ——— your bodies that are now loathsome with diseases, will be raised up in glory, without spot or wrinkle: these,

(Such as in Christ had slept, first wake and sang,
Their dew as fresh as that of sweetest herbs
Crowning the purple morn) their scatter'd atoms
Hasted with glad precipitance: such flight
The sound of the celestial Tube impressed
On ev'ry particle, how wide dispersed
Soever. Not unlike to armies call'd
By martial drum, or trumpet shrill; they troop
All to their standard, not one party fails.

Catherall.

‡ The present condition of the body of man is vile; vile in its original; our body is made of vile dust: vile in regard of its moral vileness, and sinful vileness; vile in regard of its accidental vileness, as their body is the seat of their vile diseases, and subject to vile abuses; vile, considered with respect to its ultimate vileness at death; how does a body, as beautiful as ever was *Abraham's*, when death comes, run into rottenness and putrefaction! our sin made us vile in the sight of God whilst we lived, and renders our bodies viler in the sight of men when we die. But such *will be* the future condition which the bodies of good men will be in, at the appearance of Christ, that, this vile body shall be a beautiful and blessed body, the body we lay down shall be rebuilt, formed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; resembling his incorruptibility and immortality, in purity and spirituality, in power and activity, in happiness and felicity.

Burkitt.

these, that are now weak, will then arise powerful, and strong; these tottering fabricks, that are now needing new supplys of food, raiment, rest, sleep, and physick, will be raised up spiritual bodies, that will not be craving such necessities any more; but, like the angels of God, shall be exempted from all wants or miseries, that attend the saints while they are travelling the coasts of mortality—Thus, the righteous shall shine, *as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.* Dan. 12. 3.

Then, believers, your bodies, that are sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; they, which are sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual; then, this corruption shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality; *then death shall be swallowed up in victory*; and ye may sing the triumphant song, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory. — Then, this mass of earth, this brittle lump of clay, which doth so clogg and entangle the vigorous and active soul, and oft-times obstructs its spiritual operations, shall be made a vigorous and active help to the mind.—These bodies, which are now infested with such a multiplicity of inconveniencies, subject to so many changes, tormented with so many diseases, defiled with so much corruption, and overwhelmed with so many calamities; these bodies of the saints shall then be made glorious, and perfect, free from all misery or mutability, and become a fit receptacle and habitation for the soul, and its proper vehicle for evermore.

Yes, the saints bodies, which, in their corruptible state in this world, were greatly deformed by sin, and its dismal consequents, shall then be endued with excellent beauty, and glory.—These bodies, which

which, in this life, were lumpish, heavy and stiff, shall then be endued with agility and velocity, that, like the glorious angels, they may stir and move, ascend and descend, thro' the regions of heaven, without trouble or opposition. But ah, how different from this will be the situation of the wicked, at the resurrection; whose bodies will be then raised, and reunited to the soul, that both soul and body may be chained in the bottomless pit of darkness and perdition for evermore! ‡ — These bodies of the saints which were once frail, crazy, weak, tender, and ready to succumb under the least distemper, shall then be endued with such agility and strength, as will make them surmount all the infirmities they were, in this life, lyable unto: they will then be capable to produce such acts, as far transcends the sphere of their activity, here below — Then shall they be rid for ever, of all these diseases and cumbrances, which attend them, in this present evil world; they will *then* have no tormenting cares, in providing food and raiment; for they shall be satisfied with the fulness of God's house, they will feast upon the true bread of life, and drink the streams of the pure river of the waters of life, and shall never again hunger nor thirst. Rev. 21. 4. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.* Rejoice then, O my soul, in the prospect of this glorious resurrection; for Christ, thy Lord and thy redeemer, has the keys of hell and of death in his hand.

‡ Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself, their everlasting curse — would they not bless the grave, *the land where all things are forgotten*; and with to lie eternally hid, in its deepest gloom? but the dust refuses to conceal their persons; or draw a *vail*, over their practices.

Hervey.

hand, and will, at the resurrection, admit his saints, in body as well as in spirit, to the heavenly paradise of God, where they shall live and reign, for ever and ever.

Say not, O my soul, that the resurrection of the dead, is a work too difficult for Christ. Consider who he is, and then thou canst not hesitate to say, *he is able to do it.* †—He is God coequal, coessential, and coeternal with the father; 'twas he, who formed man, out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; by him were all things made, which are in heaven and in earth, whether visible or invisible——by *him*, not as an instrumental mean, but as an efficient cause, *for of him, and thro' him, and to him are all things.* Rom. 11. 36. 'Twas he, who came *in the fulness of time to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* Gal. 4. 5. Even so, *the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the son of man, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* John 5. 28.

The saints may lie down in their graves, as in a dormitory, or bed of repose; for tho' their bodies dissolve into dust, and every particle thereof should be scattered, through the distant corners of the world; yet, he that made man out of the dust, and made that dust of nothing, can instantly recollect all these dispersed atoms, and put them in their entire and perfect form——He, who after the long winter,

† 'Tis true Christ's power would not be a sufficient argument, for the dead's being raised; if he had made no revelation of his will in the Scriptures concerning the resurrection of the dead; for he is able to do many things which he has not said that he will do; but, in this case, Christ is not only able to do it, but he has also declared, that he will raise the dead, at the last day.

ter, makes all things on the earth to revive, in the spring season, can easily, after the winter of death, make our bodies to revive out of the grave, at the spring of the resurrection——He, that infused life into a dead *Lazarus*, can soon by the word of his almighty power, make every dead body to live——He that breathed life upon a field of dry bones, can easily pour life into rotten bodies——He, who in the days of his flesh, made the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the dead to arise, can soon quicken our mortal bodies, and raise them, free of all infirmities——Is the GLORY of Israel, and the STRENGTH thereof, as a man that he should lie? Hath he spoken, and will he not do it? hath he said, and will it not come to pass?

Let the sectary of *Sadducees* deny this doctrine; let the Athenian philosophers mock, and ridicule an apostle, when they hear him preach of a resurrection †. Let the prophane Atheist, and every graceless wretch laugh

† Acts xvii. 18. *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him; and some said, what will this babler say? other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection——* These two sects were not only contrary to each other in their tenets, but strangely averse to the Christian religion, both in their principles and practices. The *Epicureans* were so, because they found their pleasures, and jovial humour, and their loose and exorbitant course of life (consequent upon their disbelief of a God, a providence, and a future state) so much checked, and controuled by the strict and severe precepts of Christ; and because Christianity so plainly and positively asserted a divine providence, the subsistence of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the state of rewards and punishments after death, which they absolutely denied. The *Stoicks* on the other hand, tho' pretending to principles of great and uncommon rigour and severity, and such as had the nearest affinity to the Christian religion, yet found themselves aggrieved with it. For (besides their doctrine of fate, which they made superior to their *Jupiter*) that meek and humble temper of mind, that modesty, and self-denial, which the gospel so earnestly recommended,

laugh at this important truth, as they will; yet know thou, O my soul—Know all ye expectants of heaven, that he who raised the ruler's daughter, from death to life——He who raised the widow's son, as they were carrying his corps to be interred——He who raised up Lazarus, after he had lyen some days in the grave, will likewise raise up every human body, at the last day.

This may seem impossible, in the eyes of carnal men; but those things which are impossible with men, are possible with God. The Lord Jesus Christ, by the same divine power, whereby he raised up his own body, and is able to do what he pleaseth, and to subdue all things to himself, will call the dead to come out of their graves, and to arise——Can the potter make a new vessel, of the same lump, if the first displease him? And cannot God raise our bodies out of the dust; with which they may have intermixed? Can the *goldsmith* by the art of his calling, separate diverse metals from one another; or can the *alchymist* extract one kind of metal out of another? And is not J E H O V A H skilled enough, to distinguish the dust of mens bodies, from other earth, or one man's body from another *? Shall the shadow of *Peter*, be the instrumental mean
of

mended, was so directly contrary to the immoderate pride, and haughtiness of that *set*, who were not ashamed to make their wife men equal, and in some things exceed God himself, that 'tis no wonder, we find them treating a preacher of such doctrines with slight and disdain.

Cave's lives of the Apostles.

* The late Reverend Mr. Boston has an excellent observation, near a kin to this, in that valuable book of his, intituled, *Human nature in its Fourfold-State*: Let, says he, the bodies of men be laid in the grave, let them rot there, and be resolved into the most minute particles: or let them be burnt, and the ashes cast into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be scattered by the wind: let the dust of a thousand generations be mingled, and the streams of the dead bodies wander to and fro in the air: let birds

of healing the sick; or *Elijah's* bones, of giving life to the dead? And can it be too hard a work for him, who was the efficient cause of both, to call forth the grave's prisoners, and make them all to arise?

Yes, yes, the dead shall arise. But Oh, what a fearful resurrection will it be, to every impenitent worker of iniquity? Drunkards, ye must arise; but the only drink you can then have, will be the terrible cup of God's wrath, put into your hands †: ye lustful debauchees, that now give up your bodies to all manner of uncleanness, ye must arise, and then make your bed, in the flames of fire and brimstone for ever: ye haughty and proud mortals, ye must arise; not to be exalted unto pinacles of honour, but to be debased into eternal disgrace and contempt—All the tribe of unbelievers must arise, to be sentenced unto utter darkness, where there is nothing, but *weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth*,
—Ex-

or wild beasts eat the dead bodies or the fishes of the sea devour them, so that the parts of human bodies thus destroyed, pass into substantial parts of birds, beasts or fishes: or what is more than that, let man-eaters who themselves must die, and rise again, devour human bodies; and let others devour them again, and then let our modern Sadducees propose the question in these cases, as the ancient Sadducees did in the case of the woman who had been married to seven husbands successively, Matth. xxii. 28. We answer as our blessed Lord and Saviour did, verse 29. Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

† The sin of drunkenness has not perhaps more universally prevailed, than at this day; and doubtless it is the inlet to many other heinous and prevailing evils. *Hieron* says of the drunkard, *Nonquam ego ebrius castum putavi.* What pity is it, that they who ought to be the suppressors of all vice (I mean those of distinction and in authority) should be so easily led in, and so much addicted to this one! a sin against which the Lord has pronounced a fearful *Woe!* a sin which (if repentance prevent not) will at last usher in eternal ruin, after all the racking pains, and pinching poverty, which are ordinarily the effects of it in this life. Let the drunkard seriously ponder the following texts, *Isa. xxviii. 1. Joel. i. 5. Prov. xxiii. 29. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 10.*

—Except ye repent in time, perish ye must, through everlasting ages.

MEDITATION X.

On the Signs and Terrors of the last Judgment.

NOW, my soul, the labour of the day is past, and the time draws on, which by the God of nature, is appointed for rest. But, what if some messenger should be sent me, in the silent watches of the night, to summon me before the awful tribunal of the great God! shall I venture to lie down and sleep, without calling myself to a reckoning, at the bar of CONSCIENCE, and without setting about the exercise, which I would wish to have been found at, when the midnight alarm is proclaimed §?

The great day of accounts is approaching, when I shall be sifted before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let my thoughts now be employed, about this grand and important theme! while others are lying in a profound sleep, let me embrace a silent hour, in giving
K scope

§ At midnight when mankind is wrapt in peace,
And worldly fancy feeds on golden dreams,
To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour;
At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst
From tenfold darkness; sudden as the spark
From smitten steel; from nitrous grain, the blaze.

Night-Thoughts.

scope to my meditation, on a subject full of majesty, and a subject in which I am deeply interested.

And is it undoubtedly certain, that I must be called to an account——That sea and land must give up their dead, and that all mankind must appear before the tremendous tribunal of Christ? Yes, my soul, testimonies from sacred writ croud in, to confirm the momentous truth! *God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 31. *Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him †; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.* Rev. i. 7. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away; and there was found no place for them; and I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works.* Rev. xx. 12. *I beheld till the thrones were*

† This was fulfilled, (1.) When Christ came by the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem, by taking vengeance on his murderers, when his crucifiers might discern that those heavy and direful judgments were inflicted on them for their crucifying Christ and persecuting Christians. But, (2.) It will be more eminently and universally fulfilled at the general day of judgment, when Christ will come riding upon the clouds, as in a triumphant chariot, and all human eyes shall then see him, his persecutors and despisers particularly beholding him, but not all alike; such as pierced him, but repented, whose hearts were afterwards pierced for their piercing of him, these at that day shall see Christ with astonishing joy, though they put him to bitter sorrow; the death of Christ has procured mercy for those, whose cruelty did procure his death; but as for such as pierced him, but never repented, both such as pierced him in his person, or in his members, they shall also see him to their sorrow, and shall wail, or take on heavily, because of him; that is, because they must be judged by him.

Burkitt.

were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire, a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, the judgment was set, and the books were opened. Dan. vii. 9.—Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied of these things, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of their ungodly deeds, Jude 14. It is appointed for all men once to die, and after this the judgment. Heb. ix. 27. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive, the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Cor. v. 10.

As a general judgment is clearly intimate, from so many scripture citations; 'tis also manifest, from the justice and equity of God; even reason itself pleads for it. It is a righteous thing with God, (says an apostle, when speaking to the saints, who had suffered tribulation for the name of Christ) It is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest—This righteous thing is not fully performed, in this life; for this world is frequently a theatre, upon which the godly are exposed to all manner of reproach, and affliction; while the wicked oftentimes apparently do prosper; therefore it cannot be, but that God hath appointed a day in righteousness, when justice shall cast all things in just scales, and equal ballance—Shall rain down vengeance on all them that know not God; and shall pour peace, joy, and comfort, upon every faithful follower of the Lamb—Dives may receive his good

things, in this life ; and *Lazarus* his evil things ; but the day is a coming, when the first shall be condemned, and the last acquitted.

The body is now participant with the soul, both in virtues and vices ; and does not reason require, that the same body should rise out of its sepulchre, should have all its dispersed particles reunited, and be brought before God's righteous tribunal to be rewarded, according to its actions with the soul ?

How contemptibly was Christ himself treated, in this world ! he was publickly dishonoured, and put to open shame, (as were many of his saints after him). Is it not then necessary, even by the voice of reason, that there should be a day, wherein *JESUS* shall manifest his power and majesty, to the whole world, in the sight of angels and men ? How wretched then will be the situation, and how loud the cry of his enemies ; who will be brought forth †, to receive their dreadful doom, after which, they must ly under the fatal blow of his vengeance, and be trampled under foot, never to behold his face in glory, or in mercy any more ; but to bear under the vials of his wrath, for ever and ever.

An evangelist informs us, that, after the Lord had denounced utter ruin and desolation against the *Jewish* temple, in which they so much boasted ; the disciples came secretly unto him, anxious to know not only the time, when that prophecy concerning the

- † Hark how the daring sons of infamy,
 Who once dissolv'd in pleasures lay,
 And laugh'd at this tremendous day,
 To rocks and mountains now to hide 'em cry,
 But rocks and mountains all in ashes lie.
 Their shame's so mighty, and so strong their fear,
 That rather than appear
 Before a God incens'd, they would be hurl'd
 Amongst the burning ruins of the world,
 And lie conceal'd, if possible, for ever there.

Pomfret's Poems.

the temple should be fulfilled, but also the time of his second coming to judgment, *Matth. xxiv.* To which our Lord replied; not by assigning any particular period, when these things should be accomplished; but by shewing the signs, which should precede both the destruction of the temple, and the end of the world. And indeed, what our Lord intimates upon another occasion, is abundantly applicable here, *Acts i. 7.* *It is not for you, to know the times and the seasons, which the father hath put in his own power.* The Lord, in his wisdom, hath lockt up in secrecy, and hid from the view of men, both the time of every particular person's death, and the general judgment of the world*; but he has withal assured us, that there will be such a day, and that it is fast approaching.

Nor is the concealment of this, without its own use————Hereby the Lord checks men's vain and intense curiosity, after those things which he has not seen proper to reveal; and which cannot be

K 3

known

* But yet, notwithstanding this, many have ventured to foretell the time of the end of the world, of whom some are already confuted, the term prefixt being past ——— But the most famous opinion, and which hath found most patterns and followers, even among the learned and pious, is that of the world's duration for six thousand years. For the strengthening of which conceit, they tell us, that as the world was created in six days, and then followed the sabbath, so shall it remain six thousand years, and then shall succeed the eternal sabbath— Of this opinion were many of the ancient fathers, grounding themselves upon this analogy between the six days of the creation and the sabbath, and the six thousand years of the world's duration, and the eternal rest— *Austin* very modestly concludes, after a discussion of this point, concerning the world's duration; *Ego tempora dinumerare non audeo: nec aliquem prophetam de hac re numerum annorum existimo presini- visse.* *Nos ergo, quod scire nos Dominus noluit, libenter nesciamus.* I dare not calculate and determine times: neither do I think, that concerning this matter, any prophet hath predicted and defined the number of years. What therefore the Lord would not have us to know, let us willingly be ignorant of.

Ray.

known, by the deepest researches of the most penetrating genius; and doubtless, 'tis good ignorance, not to know what the Lord hath neither revealed, nor warranted to pry into: secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us. *Deut. xxix: 29.* It becomes not curious mortals, to dive into the secrets of God, and to expect admittance into his private counsel—The Lord slew fifty thousand threescore and ten of the *Bethshemites*, for looking into the ark; no doubt as a warning to future generations, to beware of such high presumption. And what a tendency might the knowledge of that particular day of judgment have, to make some remiss in duty, while others would thereby become stupified with terror! the knowledge of this, the Lord has wrapt up in secrecy, that men may be always ready. *Watch therefore,* says the judge himself, *for ye know not what hour, your Lord doth come.* *Matth. xxiv. 42.* But altho' the particular day is hid from our view, yet the Lord hath revealed certain tokens and signs, that when we see these forerunners of him, who will come quickly to judge the world, the saints may lift up their heads, knowing that their *Redeemer* draweth nigh,

'Tis the saying of one, who could not mistake; *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven* †. *Matth. xxiv. 29.* Without entering into the niceties which criticks have disputed about, in explaining these words,

† The prognosticks of the fatal destruction of *Jerusalem*, and those of Christ's second coming to judgment, are, by the evangelists, so mixt and interwoven; that the signs which preface the one, cannot easily
and

words, viz. whether they respect *only* the destruction of *Jerusalem*, or whether they are applicable *only* to Christ's second coming; or, whether they may have a reference to both, 'tis sufficient for my present purpose, that 'tis undeniably certain, that there will be signs of the last judgment, and these, both more remote, and more immediate-----These more remote are, the universal preaching of the gospel through the world; the fulfilling the number of the elect, for whose sake the pillars of the earth do stand, and moulder not away; the incalling of the *Jews*; the overthrow of *antichrist*, that man of sin, and son of perdition, *whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.* 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Nor will more immediate signs be wanting, to precede this awful day, and to admonish the world, that it is at hand: the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven §. No wonder the glorious luminaries

K 4

of

and precisely be distinguished from the other. It was the opinion of some of the ancients (among whom I find *Chrysostome*) that all these signs, simply and literally taken, relate to the overthrow of *Jerusalem*; but if understood mystically, are applicable to the end of the world. Others again imagine, that these signs, *the rising up of false prophets, wars and rumours of wars, sedition, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, and persecution of the disciples of Christ*, have a reference to the destruction of *Jerusalem* and of the temple; but that the signs *in the sun, moon and stars*, respect the consummation of the world, and Christ's coming to judgment.

§ These and many other signs of his coming, we find mentioned in Scripture, but what the meaning of these expressions may be, is not so clear. For, though some of them may be taken in a literal sense, yet it is manifest that others cannot. The sun may indeed be so covered with a *macula*, as to be quite obscured: and thereupon the moon necessarily lose her light, which she borrows only from the sun beams: but how the stars should in a literal sense, fall down from heaven, is inconceivable; it being almost demonstratively certain, that most of them are bigger than the whole earth. We may therefore, keeping as near as we can to the letter, thus interpret them. There shall be
great

of heaven should lose their splendor, when the king of glory himself comes, with the beams of his brightness, infinitely more transcendent than those of the sun, the moon, or the stars.—Many learned men have wrote upon these signs, literally considered; and the curious may find satisfaction thereanent, in a plurality of laborious volumes. Be it rather thy present enquiry, O my soul, to trace them in an *allegorical* sense; and altho' the way may appear singular; yet allegories are not seldom to be found, in the sacred volume. It was usual with the old testament prophets, to speak in such a way, when they foretold any remarkable desolations that were to come. Joel ii. 3. *The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.*

Pursue thy contemplations, O my soul, and view the *sun* darkened, allegorically referring to Christ, the *SUN* of righteousness; the *moon* to the *church*; and the *stars* to the *ministers* of the gospel.

And, in this sense, is not the *SUN* of righteousness darkened by false doctrines, obscured by such errors, as derogate from the mediator's glory, and extol depraved nature, or corrupted reason above scripture-revelation? does not this becloud the dignity of his person, and eclipse the illustrious body of his merits? are not all the false glosses of human invention, as so many vapours, or fogs, which derogate from the glory, and darken the beauty of the redeemer's righteousness?—How is this *SUN* darkned, by the corrupt lives and conversations of men! how many support a fair profession in words, which they deny

great signs in heaven, dismal eclipses and obscurations of the sun and moon; new stars and comets shall appear, and others disappear, and many fiery meteors be suspended in the air.

Ray.

deny in deeds! of how few can it be said, in our day, *That their light so shines before men, that others seeing their good works, glorify our father who is in heaven!* When David had committed adultery, the prophet alarms him with this charge. *Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* 2 Sam. xii. 14. How applicable is this to many empty formalists in religion, at this day! when men profess fairly, yet live lewdly; then their profession is standered by their conversation: and these are they, of whom the apostle says, *they have a form of goodness but deny the power thereof,* 2 Tim. iii. 5. They are like the great plague in the land of Egypt, a swarm of flies, that covereth the face of the earth, and darkneth the beams of this glorious sun.

Again, may not the moon be compared to the church, in a variety of respects? the sun is said to be a splendid body, made up of the most subtile matter, of the first element, which doth emit light from itself; but the moon, a more gross and opaque body, has no light of her own but what is borrowed from the sun, and which the moon emits to us, by reflecting the rays of her borrowed light. ‡ Even so, the church, allegorically compared with the moon, hath

‡ Thus as the moon is a moon to us, so the earth is with great reason concluded by the philosophers, to be a moon to the moon; not indeed a secondary planet moving periodically about her, but such a planet, as reflects the light of the sun to her. — And it is not to be doubted, if the earth reflects light, and gravitates to the moon, as well as the moon to the earth (which is highly probable) but that there is a mutual intercourse, and return of their influences and good offices.

The silver moon her western couch forsakes,
And o'er the skies her nightly circle makes.
Her solid glade beats back the sunny rays,
And to the world her borrowed light repays.

Derham and Gay.

hath no light nor splendor of divine grace ; but what is communicated to her from Christ, the blessed sun of righteousness.

The sun, altho' sometimes overclouded, yet in itself is always bright ; but the moon, as to the eye of the world, is changeable ; sometimes, at the full, appearing as a globe ; sometimes, in the wane, hiding the far greater part of her body, and scarcely appearing in form of a semi-circle. So Christ, the sun of righteousness, is unalterably the same, *to day, yesterday, and for ever*, without the least mutability, or shadow of turning ; but the church partakes of the nature of the moon, often varying and changing in her appearance. At one time, she flourisheth, and casts forth her overspreading roots, like *Lebanon* ; at another time, she is pressed within narrow streights, and confined to so little bounds, that a mortal eye can scarcely perceive, or spy her out.—Sometimes she appears, like the moon in her full ; at other times she is so barbarously persecuted, that, to every spectator, she seems like one, swimming for life in blood.

But, to proceed in the allegory of these signs, may not the stars be also compared to the *ministers*, in Christ's church ; the brightness of whose doctrine, life, and conversation, ought to be as so many shining lamps, before those who grope in the cloudy darkness of this world †? the watchmen of *Zion* ought to shine by purity of doctrine and holiness of life, like burning stars and bright luminaries ; that
so

† The apostles, and all faithful ministers with them, are stiled *stars*. As *stars* they shine before men, by the light of life and doctrine. As *stars* they shine with a borrowed light, derived from the sun of righteousness. Again, as *stars* are in continual motion for the good of the universe, so are the ministers of the gospel, for the good of the church ; as *stars* they shine in their own orb, attending the proper duty of their place and station ; and as *stars* shine brightest in the cold winter nights, so do they in the times of afflictions and persecution.

so they may become the happy instruments of turning many unto righteousness; and then, hereafter they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars of heaven for evermore.

How deplorable the reflection, that these degenerate days produce too many teachers, who fall from the purity of evangelical doctrine into the corrupts dregs, and empty dreams of human inventions: such, alas like *Lucifer*, not only fall themselves, but are ready to draw a mighty train after them into ruin.

But, besides these blazing *meteors*, there are others who stand like more fixed stars, to the purity of divine doctrine; but most foully fall from holiness of life and conversation. How many are there, who bear the character of heaven's heralds, and yet imitate the mole, by perpetually grovelling in the earth? these, like the scribes and Pharisees, sit in Moses' chair and teach others, but not themselves; they say much, and no doubt much good, because they are to be heard; but while they neglect to practise, they can never appear as shining stars of light, but as black clouds of darkness. Ay, and the day is coming, when every masque of hypocrisy will be taken away. O dreadful day! how justly termed by a prophet, *the great and terrible day of the Lord*....

How terrible, O my soul, will this day be to the wicked! it will be dreadful, in respect of the preparations for its approach; which an apostle describes in the most awful language. 2 Pet. iii. 10. *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* 'Twill come as a thief in the night, neither expected nor looked for. Sudden surprisals tend most to confound mens thoughts, to suppress their
spirits,

spirits, and to baffle all the succours and auxiliaries which reason offers; but then, the surprisal of this day will be one of the least astonishing circumstances, to the workers of iniquity.

What inconceivable horror and amazement, was the soul of the rich man in, to whom our saviour spoke in the parable! He, overjoyed with his possessions, sung a *requiem* to his soul, *Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. But God said unto him, *Thou fool †, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall these things be?* Luke xi. 20. Had the Lord only said, ‘Thou stigmatized fool, thou wretched cosmopolite, *this night thy barn shall be burnt, and all thy substance consumed to ashes*’; this indeed would have caused a mighty consternation of spirit for the present, yet he might have probably recovered himself with the hopes of longer life, and of gaining a second fortune; but, *this night thy soul shall be required of thee*, are words full of dread and terror. Oh, what trembling of body, what anguish of spirit, what convulsions of conscience must have then possessed this miserable worldling! how sad were the reflections which (we may suppose) he now had upon his own folly? *And now*, might he have said, *must all that joy and mirth, all that pleasure*
and

† This rich man is justly stigmatized as a fool. — A fool, because he imagined, that his worldly riches were a sufficient treasure for his soul — *A fool*, because when he abounded in wealth, he knew not the proper use he should have made of it. — *A fool*, because he vainly dreamed, his life would be lengthened out for many years, when death was just at his door — *A fool*, because he foresaw none of the dangers he might have fallen into, even in the midst of his prosperity. — *A fool*, because he was more busied about the momentary things of this world, than about the world to come. — *A fool*, because his care was about a mortal body, while his immortal soul was neglected. — *A fool*, because he was pursuing such steps, as endangered him to lose heaven, for earth.

and ease which I promised myself, for so many years, be lost and gone in a few hours? Must my laughter be so suddenly turned into bitter howlings, and my easy rest into a bed of flames? Ah, woe me, what a doleful alarm, what a sudden surprisal is this! In the midst of all my glory, in the meridian of my pleasure, must I so suddenly leave it? Oh that I had been as careful in laying up treasures in heaven, as I have been in hoarding them up, upon earth! ah what folly have I been guilty of, who have spent so many years entirely pursuing after that which I must now leave within a few hours—But alas, alas—if these flames of grief and sorrow, that are now a kindling in my breast, be so dreadful, how can I endure the fire of hell? how shall I dwell with everlasting burnings. O bewitching world! now to my sad experience, I know thee better than ever, that thou art full of empty and deceitful vanities. Ah, I have been ensnared and engaged to play the fool, and now alas, must I shortly smart for it—Here was a miserable creature suddenly surprized, by fear and horror taking hold of him.

Yet this affords a representation of the agony only of one individual; but, when the terrible day of the Lord cometh, the greater part of mankind shall be surprized, in the most astonishing manner. For, as it was in the days of *Noah*, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man; they did eat and drink, they married and were given in marriage, until the day that *Noah* entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them: and as it was in the days of *Lot*, they did eat and drink, they bought, they sold, they planted and builded; but, on that very day, in which *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, the Lord rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed the guilty citizens †——So shall it be in the day of the Son of man;

† Luke 17. 26. 30.

man; when all these fiery bodies in the superior regions, which have been so long kept in a regular course, within their appointed limits, shall then (as it were) get loose reins, and by the rapidity of their motion, will at once put the world into a confusion, and a conflagration; when the earth and all things therein, shall be turned into a funeral pile; and all the sulphureous and combustible matter, which, for ages, have been wrapt up in its bowels, shall evaporate into prodigious flames, and in so great abundance, that no creature can resist its fury.——In a word, then there shall issue such streams of fire, out of the bowels of the earth, and the clouds and catarracts above, shall discharge such plenty of thunder and lightning, that both joining together, will combine to accomplish the final dissolution of the world. *

Say, O my soul, what will *then* become of all these perishing and fading glories, which foolish men so much court and admire? how mean *then* will be the appearances of stately structures, glorious palaces, delightful gardens, fruitful orchards, fertile countries, magnificent courts, and durable monuments? *Then*, they will be all buried in one common heap of ruin, when the whole face of the earth be-

comes

- * Add to earth's copious fuel, what the air
Shall minister in large supplies to haste
The universal fire. Where fertile clouds
Wont to drop fatness, their fresh dew distil'd,
And blessings on the earth, there nought, but fires
Compact with unctuous vapours, shall be seen
To blaze terrefic, every where diffus'd.
Loud peals of thunder shall be heard to roar;
Wing'd with red lightning, which in torrents pour'd
Upon this globe shall man and beast consume.
The sun with more than wonted strength shall dart
His rays direct, and scorch earth's inmost womb.
— With all this pomp of terror, earth's fair frame
Shall be dissolv'd, and time shall be no more.

Catherall.

comes; as it were, like the tops of *Aetna* and *Vesuvius* which vomit up fire, rubbish and stones. — Where *then* will be found, the proud and lofty looks of earthly men? What will *then* become of the vast revenues, the large possessions, and immense treasures of the noble, the potent, and the mighty? But oh, where shall the wicked *then* appear, who have made a mock at sin, scoffed religion, dishonoured God, and put the evil day afar off? Will they fly to the tops of mountains? That should be but to expose themselves, to more ready destruction from heaven. Shall they hide themselves in caverns and dens of the earth? In these shelters, they would find nothing but furnaces of devouring fire. The mountains might fall upon them, but could not hide them from the face of him, *who sits upon the throne*. Should they plunge into the depths of the sea, or wing their flight to the distant corners of the world; God's vengeance would fly after them, would pursue them, and overtake them; the mighty hand of the God of *Jacob*, would even *there* reach them, and bring them back to judgment. To fly will be impossible, to stand for impenitent sinners, will be intolerable. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the ungodly appear * in that day?*

With what a solemn grandeur, is Christ's coming to judgment described, in sacred writ! the greatest displays of earthly majesty, are usually made, when a migh-

* 1 Pet. iv. 18. — The apostle is generally supposed, here to speak with respect to the judgment which was then at hand, upon the Jewish nation and temple; and thus to point out the difficulty that would then attend the godly, who would escape, and but *scarcely* escape, from that desolating calamity — And there is nothing inconsistent with this, to apply the apostle's language here also, which, I find, not a few grave and learned divines have done.

Where, where, for shelter shall the guilty fly,

When consternation turns the good man pale.

Night-thoughts.

a mighty MONARCH marches triumphantly, in the midst of his well-disciplined and puissant army, with open banners, and all the pomp of a martial camp—with the chief attendants, surrounding his royal person, his trumpets sounding before him, and his approach welcomed, with universal acclamations of joy—Doubtless, such a sight must strike every beholder with astonishment—And, after this manner, is the Lord's coming to judgment pointed out. He comes in the clouds of heaven, riding triumphantly (as it were) upon a chariot, on a body of light, brighter than the sun, with power and great glory; sending his angels, with the loud sound of a trumpet before him; and then, the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from heaven, with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God—Yet beware, O my soul, and entertain not so gross apprehensions as to imagine, that this will be a material trumpet; it rather seems to be, the voice of the SON of God, which the dead shall hear; and then they shall arise, and appear before him.

The second coming of Christ is said to be, after the manner of a mighty prince, sitting on the bench of majesty, with all his nobles and courtiers, standing around his royal throne, and he, in his own person, calling every malefactor to be condemned, *Matth. xxv.* He will sit upon his throne of glory, with all the angelical tribes around him †, and all nations of the earth shall be gathered before him. If the countenance

† But now the eastern skies expanding wide
 The glorious JUDGE omnipotent descends,
 And to the sublunary world his passage bends;
 Where, cloath'd with human nature, he did once reside.
 Round him the bright ætherial armies fly,
 And loud triumphant *Hallelujahs* sing,
 With songs of praise, and hymns of victory,
 To their celestial KING.

— Round

tenance of a judge be so terrible to a guilty malefactor, and strikes such a dread in the heart of a condemned prisoner.—If men be taken with such an awe and reverence, at the majesty of an earthly king, where there is no fear of punishment; ah what ground of horror and fear will the wicked have at that day, when the strictest justice, and the greatest majesty imaginable, shall meet in the person of this judge? Yea, all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.

The saints themselves have been seized with dread by a sudden consternation, at some extraordinary divine appearances——The sight upon mount *Sinai* (when it was all in a flame, the ALMIGHTY uttering his voice, and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder) made the whole host of Israel, to fear and quake exceedingly *. When the Lord discovered only a ray of his glory in a vision, to the prophet *Isaiah*, he cried out with fear, *Woes me for I'm undone—for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts* ‡—If so much majesty appeared in Christ in the days of his flesh, that when his enemies came to apprehend him, they were smote with terror, and fell backward to the ground; how much more majesty will he have, in his appearance at the great day, when he comes to manifest that glory to men and angels, which was concealed in the days of his flesh; then *the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know*

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not

—— Round the tribunal, next to the most high,
In sacred discipline and order, stand
The peers and princes of the sky,
As they excel in glory or command.

Pomfret.

* *Exod. xix. 16.*

‡ *Isa. vi. 5.*

not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Theff. i. 7, 8.

How terrible will this day be, in respect of the proceedings thereon! *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*——Then the secrets of every heart shall be discovered; every thought, word and action shall be examined, and all persons righteously judged. The most latent impurities, the most subtle hypocrisy, the most cunning and artificial fraud, and the most dissimulate malice, will then be brought to publick view; and every one's sins will be laid in order, and broadband before his eyes——represented as clearly, as if they were in the immediate act of committing them. Then the conscience which has been long seared as it were, with a hot iron, shall awaken with a terrible vengeance. And in that day, no enchanting musick can cure the stings, and bitings of this *tarantula* † within; no soporifick or dormitive, no opium of stupidity or *Atheism*, can give an hour's rest, or a moment's respite. How will the wicked *then* curse the day on which they were born §, the womb that bare them, and the breasts that gave them suck!

Yes,

† The *Tarantula* is a venomous kind of spider, speckled with white and black, or red and green spots; they much abound in *Naples*, and 'tis said of them, that their bite is of such a nature, as to be cured by musick—However that be, 'tis a certain and sad truth, that the stings of the consciences of wicked men are too often and too easily cured, by the deceitful musick of a betwitching and deluding world, to which unregenerate men, under the horrors of an alarmed conscience, frequently fly for ease and relief; but in the world to come, the wicked will have no partners in iniquity, that can in the least comfort them, nor any medicine that can give them an instant's respite.

§ We have indeed an account, in sacred writ, of two eminent saints, who, while in this world, said of their birth-day, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man.*

Yes, they will even then curse themselves, for their folly, in so readily succumbing to satannical suggestions; and they will not fail to pour curses upon such, as were their instigators to sin. May we not suppose, the wretched reprobate will then cry out in anguish, "Ah wretched I! how am I undone for evermore? How often was I warned of this day, from God's holy word! how warmly was I admonished and assured, that this would be the fruit and wages of my sinful life! Oh, that I had then taken warning! but alas, such was the stupidity of my vile heart, such the insatiable desire I had for the pleasures of sin, that I frequently departed, scoffing those friendly admonitors——O for a little respite! O for a lease of some few years! Oh to have my precious and mispent time recalled! but now I'm lost, I am irrecoverably undone to all eternity."

Now is the time of divine patience; the season, in which the Lord exerciseth forbearance, towards sinners; but hereafter shall the impenitent find, to their everlasting sorrow and grief, that the dreadful and terrible day of God's wrath is coming, in which they will

L 2

find

man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it, let a cloud dwell upon it, let the blackness of the day terrify it. Job. iii. 2, 4, 5. And, cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Jer. xx. 14.—— With respect to these expressions, it must be said of the saints that uttered them, *this was their infirmity*; and indeed the most eminently godly man has not at all times, the same exercise of these graces, which at some seasons shine most illustriously in him; and 'tis certainly those and only those, who are in hell, that have cause to wish they had never been born, *Matth. xxvi. 24.* Mean time, as Mr. Henry expresses himself, 'Let us observe it, to the honour of the spiritual life above the natural, that tho' many have cursed the day of their first birth, never any cursed the day of their new birth, nor wished they never had had grace, and the spirit of grace given them.'

find *justice* without *mercy*, *vengeance* without *pity*, and *execution* without further *delay*. But O happy, beyond all expression, they upon whom the joyful sentence will then be pronounced, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. Lift up your heads, ye saints, in the prospect of this day! in which ye shall be openly acquitted, before God, angels, and men — Next will the irreclaimable workers of iniquity have their irrevokable doom pronounced; and Oh! what an awful sentence will, in that day, be past against them! the judge will then say to those on his left hand, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* — who can imagine words more full of horreur ‡.

What an immense multitude must appear, at this tremendous tribunal! all who ever lived, from the first man Adam, to the last that shall breathe on the earth, must stand before the *judgment seat of Christ*. There is no prince or potentate, no prophet or apostle, no man or woman, whether rich or poor, high or low, that can plead exemption from this righteous bar. And how shall the unclean adulterer, the covetous usurer,

‡ The Lord, the sov'reign, sends his summons forth,
Calls the *south* nations, and awakes the *north*;
From *east* to *west* the sounding orders spread
Thro' distant worlds, and regions of the dead;
No more shall Atheists mock his long delay;
His vengeance sleeps no more: behold the day,
Behold the judge descends; his guards are nigh,
Tempest and fire attend him down the sky;
Heaven, earth and hell draw near; let all things come
To hear his justice and the sinner's doom.

— Sinners, awake betimes; ye fools, be wise;
Awake, before this dreadful morning rise;
Change your vain thoughts your crooked works amend;
Fly to the Saviour, make the judge your friend;
Lest, like a lion, his last vengeance tear
Your trembling souls, and no deliverer near.

Watts.

usurer, the prophane blasphemer, the debauched drunkard, the cruel oppressor, the cunning deceiver, the mischiveous liar, the dissembling hypocrite, the bloody murderer, the deceitful trader, the negligent pastor, the unjust judge—how shall all the black band of impenitent wretches, be able to lift up their faces, before the glorious judge? Where *then* will be the glory of these, who now pass under the name of mighty conquerors; such as the mighty *Alexander*, the fortunate *Caesar*, and such famous warriors? The most magnificent generals will then be divested of their trains and attendants, and must stand *naked*, before the righteous judge, to receive their final sentence. And oh, what can all the ungodly crew, who have been companions in sin, answer at this day; but plead guilty? Consider this, *ye that forget God*, lest he *tear you in pieces*, when there be none to deliver you.

Well, the day is hastening on—the judge will shortly come; and I may address the expectants of his coming, as the two men, in white apparel, said unto the apostles, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven**,

L 3

Acts

* This message, sent from heaven, to the spectators of our Lord's ascension expressly intimates, that Christ will come at the last day, in that human nature which he took with him to heaven. —'Tis said, 1 Cor. vi. 2. *that the saints shall judge the world*; and our Lord himself said unto his disciples, Matth. xix. 28. *Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*—By which sacred expressions, we are not to understand any infringement made upon the authority of Christ the JUDGE; but these may either point out (1.) That the apostles, the ministers, and saints of Christ will stand up as witnesses against the wicked, at the great day. Or, (2.) The saints, as assessors with Christ, will cordially approve of the righteous procedure, on that awful day.

Acts i. 11. Chear up your hearts, believers, and rejoice in the prospect of the judge's approach: but, be afraid ye workers of iniquity, for this judge will be terrible in his appearance unto you.

HE is of omnipotent power, and doth among all the armies of his creatures, in heaven or in earth, as seemeth meet in his sight; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, *what doest thou?* HE made all things at first out of nothing; and *without him was not any thing made, which was made.* John i. 3. Oh then, how may the wicked tremble, at the apprehension of his coming, who has an arm of infinite power!

HE is also of omniscient knowledge; his eyes are brighter than the sun, and more piercing than flames of fire; they run up and down the earth, and behold the most secret actions thereon. HE sees all our thoughts afar off, and knows them, before they are perfectly conceived in our minds; he seeth in darkness, as well as in light; and at midnight, as well as at noonday; as there is no shield, nor buckler, nor sanctuary in this world, that can secure from the stroke of his OMNIPOTENCY; so there is no covert, nor shade of darkness, that can conceal from his OMNISCIENCY.

Adam could not be hid from God's all-seeing eye, when he violated the divine command, in *eating the forbidden fruit.* HE saw cruel *Cain* when guilty of fratricide, by embruining his unmerciful hands, in the crying blood of the innocent *Abel*: he beheld the designs and draughts of the sons of *Jacob*, when they made sale of *Joseph* to the Medianitish merchants, to be carryed down to Egypt; *David's* bloody act, in murdering *Uriah*, and his defiling of *Bathsheba*; the unnatural treason and rebellion of *Abalom*, and the wicked counsel of subtile *Achitophel*, were all naked before this great judge. *Ahab's* tyranny and oppressi-

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on over poor *Naboth*; *Jezebel's* cruelty, *Haman's* pride, *Balaam's* covetous heart after the wages of iniquity, *Gehazi's* avarice, the *Pharisee's* pride and boasting, were all clearly seen by the eyes of this judge, to whom every one must give account. He hath his throne in the highest heavens, and from the habitation of his dwelling place, he beholds all the children of men. *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?* Psal. xciv. 9.—Ah sinner, as thou canst not now escape the eye of his omniscience, so, if thou repent not, thou shalt not be able to avoid falling a sacrifice into the omnipotent hands of HIM, who is now thy witness, and will at the last day, be thy judge.

Then he will also appear, inflexible in his justice. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Yes, no creature can *then* prevail with him; no tears, no crys, no sighs, or groans will move him to turn aside from the strictest of justice. His scepter is most straight, his judgment most righteous, his eye most penetrating; and he will not look upon any bribes, nor be intreated, in that day, for the wicked; neither will he shew them mercy any more—Such is the judge, and such his properties, before whom thou must appear, O my soul, at the last day; when soul and body have their second meeting together.

‘Seeing then, *O ye children of men*, all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastning unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.’ O that men would beware, lest their hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunken-

ness; and so, this day surprize them unawares †! Arise from the bed of sloth, O my soul;—remember the inhabitants of *Laiſh*, Judges xviii. 7. Their security made them become the spoil and prey of their enemies,—remember the foolish virgins, Matth. xxv. *They slumbred and slept until midnight, when the cry was given, behold the bridegroom cometh;* and the want of oyl in their lamps excluded them from the wedding-chamber. Thrice happy these, whom the Lord when he comes, shall find watching and waiting for his approach.—But miserable, for ever miserable shall he be, whom this day of the Lord overtakes sleeping securely in his sins. O thou who art appointed judge of the quick and dead, prepare my heart for thy approach; come Lord Jesus, come quickly, and enable me in a lively faith of thy coming, to sing and say with thy servant of old; *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein, then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.* Psal. xcvi. 11, 12, 13.

M E D I.

* 'Tis said of *Jerom*, that he imagined the sound of the last trumpet was ever ringing in his ears; and he constantly apprehended that he heard the awful voice, *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.*—It were well, if such an alarm was sounding in the minds of the many secure and unconcerned O N E S in this age.

MEDITATION XI.

On the Ravishing Joys of the Saints in Heaven. †

THE silent watches of a gloomy night are past, the morning dawns; and lo, the feathered choir are chanting our their artless melodious musick, rejoicing at the approach of a new day! what a monitor to thee, O my soul, to sing an heavenly anthem,

† Heaven is in scripture language used either, figuratively, metonymically or synecdochically. As (1.) For God the creator of heaven and earth, Dan. iv. 26. *Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens, [i. e. the God of the heavens.] do rule.* So, our Saviour asks the rulers, priests, and elders of the Jews. Matth. xxi. 25. *The baptism of John whence was it? from heaven or of men?* And thus also the returning prodigal cry'd, Luke xv. 21. *I have sinned against heaven &c.* (2.) This expression is made use of, to signify its heavenly inhabitants, the angels and saints; John xv. 19. *Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.* (3.) Hereby is pointed forth the church militant on earth; because its rise and spring, its laws and ordinances, are from heaven, and heaven is the place appointed for the church's triumph and everlasting habitation, after a compleat victory is obtained over the devil, the world, and the flesh; thus Dan. viii. 10. *That little horn, which Daniel saw in a vision, waxed great against the host of heaven, i. e. Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the church of God upon earth.* (4.) 'Tis taken for the clouds and other meteors. Lev. xxvi. 19. *I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass.* i. e. I will so consolidate and bind up the clouds, that they shall not distill rain upon the earth. (5.) By heaven is here understood, that glorious place which is the habitation of angels and saints, and where the seat and throne of God's glory and majesty is. Here it is, where the saints enjoy, as their supremam happiness, the divine presence; and their fulness of joy, in this glorious place, is without any defect, and without all end.

them, and publish the praises of him who makes the day and the night to succeed in their turns ! yes, yes, they that *thro' much tribulation*, have entered into the kingdom of heaven, cease not night nor day, to sing a new song to God, and to the Lamb that sits upon the throne. These glorified saints have now got above the reach of either temptation or corruption ; and the prospect of such a victory, attended with unutterable glory, may be remarkably useful, to cheer up those who are yet wrestling in their ascent up the hill of God ; Oh what treasures of bliss await the heavenly journeyer, when the toil of this night is over !

The glorious possession of the saints in heaven, is set forth under the name of a kingdom. *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.* Matth. xxv. 24. *Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure, to give you the kingdom.* Luke xii. 32. And how justly is it stiled, a blessed, an eternal, and everlasting kingdom ! An inspired writer speaking of the glory of this kingdom, says, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath provided for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. No imagination can conceive, no understanding can comprehend, no tongues of angels or men can express how glorious the kingdom is. It is like that *hidden manna*, that *white stone* and the *new name*, promised to him that overcomes, which no man knows but he that receiveth it. Rev. ii.

This heavenly inheritance is called by an apostle, *a crown of glory.* 1 Pet. v. 4. *When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall*

shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearance. 'Tis called a crown of life, Rev. ii. *Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life,* 'Tis called a paradise; hence Christ's words to the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* And the penman of the revelation saith, *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.* The same inspired writer describes it by a glorious and stately city, called the holy and new Jerusalem above, whose wall was of jasper, and the city was pure gold; the foundation of the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones, as the Jasper, Sapphire, Chalcedony, Emerald, Sardonyx, Sardius, Chrysolite, Beryl, Topaz, Chrysoprasus, Jacinct and Amethyst; the twelve gates of the city were twelve pearls, and the street of the city was pure gold: and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev. xxi.—By this description the spirit of God will have us to understand, that there is unutterable glory and majesty, which the Lord hath prepared for his people in heaven. And yet is it not astonishing to think, how much the sensual pleasures of this world engage the attention of most men; and how little the greatest part of mankind are concerned about securing to themselves, an everlasting inheritance, in these glorious mansions above †!

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† “Should a spirit of superior rank (says a learned writer) who is a stranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a survey of its inhabitants; what would his notions of us be? would not he think that we are a species of beings made for quite different ends and purposes than what we really are? Must not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? Would not he think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and station and title?

Nay,

The eternal felicity of the saints above, is sometimes represented by a royal feast, and a solemn entertainment, which Christ will make for the happy guests. Isa. xxv. 6. *And in this mountain, shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. — He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.* 'Tis recorded of *Ahasuerus*, that great monarch of *Asia*, who swayed a sceptre over an hundred and twenty seven provinces; that to manifest the royalty of his pomp, splendor, riches and power, he appointed a feast in his magnificent palace at *Shushan*, for all the princes and potentates of his empire, which was to continue for an hundred and fourscore days together. Esther 1. Yes, but how mean, O my soul, was *Ahasuerus's* feast? not to be compared with that glorious feast, which shall endure in heaven, thro' all eternity! *There*, the guests shall be fed with heavenly manna, and the bread of life, and shall drink of the

Nay, would not he believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal punishment, and enjoined to pursue our pleasures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a scheme of dutys quite opposite to those which are indeed prescribed to us. And truly, according to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty; and that we keep a steady eye on the end for which we were sent hither. But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above threescore and ten years? And that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age? How would he be lost in horror and admiration, when he should know that this sett of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which scarce deserves the name of existence, when I say, he should know that this sett of creatures are to exist to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations.

Addison.

the pure fountain of living waters; so that they shall never hunger nor thirst any more; but every one shall have a fulness of glory!

How grand and magnificent must that feast be, where almighty God is Lord of the feast; all his glorified saints the assessors; angels and archangels, cherubims and seraphims the ministers! *There* shall be manifested the glory and splendor, not of some few provinces, but of his extensive dominions, who is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; whose power and riches are alike infinite and inconceivable! How triumphant must be the joy of such a solemn festival; and what unspeakable bliss and happiness shall it be, O my soul, to be a partaker of it!

Is not even the *primitiae*, and first-fruits of heaven surprisingly ravishing and delightful! what then must be the possession thereof itself? What tokens of Divine Majesty has God sometimes shown to his saints here below! The Lord remarkably honoured *Moses*, in working such signs and wonders by him in Egypt, before *Pharoah*; and at the red sea, and upon mount Sinai, before the *Israelites*. The God of the prophets signalized *Elijah*, by putting as it were, the keys of the clouds in his hand, to shut the cataracts thereof, that there should neither be rain nor dew upon the earth; for such a time 1 Kings 18.—He dignified *Elisha*, by curing *Naaman* the Syrian, with a very simple receipt. *Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.* 2 Kings 5. Christ Jesus honoured his apostles, by giving them a commission and power to cast out devils, and to cure all manner of diseases, nor only by the word of their mouths, but by sending their napkins, yea by their very shadows. And, if the prophets, apostles, and other saints of God, have been so dignified in this world, where their *kingdom is not*; what unspeakable honour and glory must they receive,

ceive, upon their arrival into the kingdom of heaven, where **JEHOVAH** himself dwells? Yes, 'tis Christ's own words, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God.* Luke xii. 8. — He will set them down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the kingdom of God; where no anxious care shall molest them, no tormenting fears shall disquiet them, where there is no devils to tempt them, no corruption to sadden them: for hell, and death, and the devil shall then be all trampled under foot, and the saints will be put in possession of crowns of uncorruptible glory, robes of spotless innocency, and palms of eternal victory — There it shall be their work, their endless work to sing heavenly hallelujas, for ever and ever. But the spring-fountain of the saints felicity, will consist in the clear intuitive, beatifick vision of God's face in glory; and the enjoyment of him, in whom dwelleth the treasures of all mercy and goodness. *For they shall then see him as he is*; Not darkly as through a glass; but they shall behold him face to face. And no wonder that such as are blessed with this beatifick vision, and the enjoyment of God himself, be fully and finally happy; seeing in him is contained all happiness and bliss; for all that worldly pleasure and sublunary delight, wherein mortals do solace themselves, are but the drops distilling out of this vast and infinite ocean; they are but as streams or rivulets, flowing from this inexhaustible fountain. So that whatever degrees of delight or satisfaction are to be had in the enjoyment of the creature, they must needs be found in a far, infinitely far more eminent degree of perfection, in the Creator; who will be to his saints, *mel in ore, melos in aure*, sweeter than honey in their mouths, and more ravishing than musick in their ears; he will be a light to their understandings, and an everlasting contentment to their wills.

When

When the queen of *Sheba* * came from afar, to behold the wisdom of *Solomon*; she confessed it was a true report that she heard in her own country, of his acts and of his wisdom; she believed not till she came and saw; and behold the one half was not told her; for his wisdom and prosperity did far exceed the same she had heard, and therefore she cries out: *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.* 1 Kings x. 8. So say I, on this subject, unto you, O expectants of heaven! a great fame and report of the unspeakable and ravishing joys of heaven you have oftentimes heard; but be assured, ye have not heard, nor could ye hear the half of that same which it doth deserve. When ye arrive at that glorious place the heavenly *Jerusalem* above, there will ye behold him, that *sits upon the throne*, far greater than *Solomon*; Oh with what joy and gladness of heart, may the saints then cry out, *Happy these thy servants, O prince of peace, who stand continually before thee, and admire the depths of thy unsearchable wisdom; who are satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and with the rivers of pleasures, which are at thy right hand for evermore.*

O what ravishing delight, what transporting joys must the saints have, upon seeing their glorious redeemer, who purchased heaven for them, with his pre-

* *Josephus* thinks she was queen of *Meroe*, which was antiently called *Saba*. But a great many of his countrymen more rightly understand this matter: who say she came from *Aljemin*; which was the south part of *Arabia Felix*, near the red sea; and so our saviour calls her the *queen of the South*, which is the signification of *Jemin* in *Hebrew*; and in *Arabick* with the addition of *Al* is called *Aljemin*.—*Theodore* thinks she was a religious woman, as far as the light of nature guided her; and if we may believe the *Hebrew* tradition, she had some tincture of revealed religion from her pious ancestors: for they think she was descended from *Abraham* by *Keturah*; one of whose sons begat *Sheba*. 1 Chron. i. 32. *Patrick.*

precious blood, now sitting on his throne of majesty! If the three wise men that travelled afar from the east, under the direction of a star, rejoiced to see HIM lying in a manger; what a joyful sight must it be, to behold HIM, in his highest triumphs of glory!—*John* the baptist leaped in his mother's womb, upon *Mary* the mother of our Lord saluting her. *Luke* i. 44. *For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.* How then will the presence of Christ in heaven affect the glorified inhabitants, when they see him on his royal throne, and in his eternal kingdom! Then they will also behold all that glorious hierarchy, of principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, angels and archangels, cherubims and seraphims.—There, they will see the renowned patriarchs, the inspired prophets, the apostles and all the disciples of Christ.—There they will have the noble army of martyrs, and all the triumphant saints for their delightful and constant companions.

There they will hear Christ eternally extolled and commended, and every saint admiring his undeserved and unparallelled love unto them: and oh, how do the whole consistory of heaven triumph and exult upon the daily arrival of new brethren, winging their flight from these abodes of mortality, into that harbour of everlasting safety and happiness; carrying the spoils of their vanquished enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh, as the trophies of their victory thro' the blood of Jesus; their enemies being all foiled, so as that they shall never be able to give them any after assault ‡!

Again,

‡ Some learned men are of opinion, that the glory of the saints is daily increased in heaven, by the additional numbers of such, as have been converted, by means of their example or instructions while upon earth, or by the pious books left behind them: And that on the other hand

Again, O my soul, how will the permanence and eternity of the saints abide in heaven, compleat and amplify their joy! how joyfully will they look, with a reflecting eye, upon all these hardships and afflictions, dangers and difficulties; which they were once environed with in this world; and from which, they are now altogether, and for ever escaped! how will they *then* admire that free and unmerited grace of God, which delivered them from the great peril they were once in, and into which others have fallen irrecoverably!—They will *then* have no further occasion to join with *Paul*, in fasting, watching, and bearing down the body. There will be no *Achan* to disturb the peace of this heavenly camp; no storm in this harbour; no Philistine, Canaanite, Hivite, Perizzite, or Jebusite to molest this heavenly Canaan, or to assault any of its inhabitants; no enemy to lay siege or battery to its walls; no subtile serpent within this paradise, to deceive or beguile. No, no, the saints may then lay down all their armour, when they arrive at this land of promise; there, their only exercise will be to triumph and rejoice, for evermore; to sing anthems and hallelujahs thro' eternal ages.

Such will be the place, such the glory, such the society, and such the exercise of the saints, when they

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hand, the torments of the damned is continually augmented, by the number of those, that were led to sin through the means of their wicked practices, while in this life; or have afterwards become infected and corrupted by their errors. — Without staying here, to determine with respect to the reasons that may be offered, either for or against the above; 'tis certain that it will be a bitter ingredient in the cups of many slothful *ministers*, negligent *parents*, wicked *masters* and *teachers*, that, by their loose and lascivious lives, or their wicked instructions and examples, they have debauched and ruined such souls, as were once committed to their care.

are put in full possession of the great reward †, which the Lord Jesus Christ has purchased for them. Rev. xxii. 12. *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.*—What strange, what unaccountable stupidity would it then be, O my soul, for thee to take up with any thing, which this world can afford, as thy portion? Away with all anxious concern, about earthly vanities; slacken thy pursuits after them; and quicken thy pace, in pressing forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus. Act the part of that wise merchant that will sell all sinful pleasures, for Christ the pearl of great price. Now, is the opportunity for enriching thyself, by embracing that excellent offer. Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and the eye salve that thou mayest see.*

Remember O my soul, heaven is a prize, not awaiting every dissolute, ungodly, and slothful wretch. *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God; but he who doth the will of our father, who is in heaven: yea, the kingdom of*

† It were a gross mistake to alledge, that this reward is the conquest of the saints merits. They are by nature, children of wrath, even as others; how then could they merit the least favour at God's hand, much less the glories of heaven? In order to make any work meritorious, it must be our own work altogether. — It must be no debt. — It must be proportionable to the reward. And which of the saints ever ventured to say, that any of their duties and good works proceeded from themselves, or were meritorious in God's sight? What could poor impotent and sinful worms do, without divine grace determining, directing, and strengthening them? All they have, they received from above; their graces were all dropped from that exhaustless fountain, which is in Christ Jesus. Who then has ground to boast of any thing, as if he had not received it? It well becomes the greatest and most eminent of the saints, to say after every duty, *I am a sinful, unworthy, and unprofitable servant.*

of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Mat. xi. Get up then, O my soul, and press forward, in a Redeemer's strength; run the Christian race, looking to JESUS, the author and finisher of thy faith. He that by grace overcomes, shall sit down upon his throne, even as Christ, who overcame, hath sit down with his Father. Rev. iii. 21. Seek then, seek earnestly the kingdom of God; strive vigorously to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in, and will not be able.

Let not the difficulties of the way disquiet thee, my soul, on thy journey to heaven. What toil and fatigue will the soldier undergo, in his prince's service, for a little honour? To what hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and a multiplicity of dangers, blows, and wounds, will he expose himself? How unreasonable would it then be, for any of Christ's soldiers to grudge or repine at the little difficulties they may meet with, for his sake on the road; while they are hastening to that kingdom which he has prepared for them; where they shall eternally dwell in peace, and be fellow-heirs with Christ, and there possess a kingdom of glory, a crown of glory, robes, palms, and sceptres of glory, yea, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Blessed are these sufferings, which draw after them such glorious honours; blessed that poverty which is followed with everlasting treasures; and blessed that sorrow, which ends in unspeakable joy.—Be cheered up then, O my soul, and conclude this morning's meditation, with the words of him, who was caught up into the third heavens, Rom. viii. 18. *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us.*

MEDITATION XII.

On the Terrible Misery of the Wicked in Hell.

OH how dreadful that sentence, which shall be passed against the impenitent workers of iniquity! *Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* The place, appointed for these miserable wretches, must needs be terrible and frightful; and the torments such, as can neither be expressed nor imagined. The very names by which hell is decyphered, are terrible. Isa. xiv. 12,—26. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! for thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God—I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High: yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.* This place of torment is sometimes called GEHENNA, which is originally a *Chaldaic* word, used both in the *Hebrew* and *Greek* language *; in the last of which, it seems to be

* The *Greek* language is remarkably copious of words expressive of the dreadfulfulness of this place. — 'Tis called *αἰς* from the privative particle *α* and *αἰς*; implying that there is no object to be seen, in hell, which can delight the optic sense. — 'Tis called *ζοπος* 2 Pet. ii. 4 — 'Tis called *ταπρος*, which Etymologists derive from the verb *ταρασσω* or *ταπαλλω* which frequently signifies to trouble, molest, or

be a compound word from *γῆ*, which signifieth earth or land, and from the word *Hinnom*, the name of a valley nigh to *Jerusalem*, called the *valley of Hinnom*, where the idolatrous Jews sacrificed their children, in the fire, to the idol *Molech*; and when the poor infants were cast alive into the fire, the cruel parents caused trumpets, timbrels, and other musical instruments to be sounded, that they might not hear the pitiful shrieks, and deplorable howlings of these tormented children: and this word *Hinnom* is made use of in scripture, to point out the place of the damned; whose woeful cries and lamentations, shall roar through the vast lake, which burns for ever with fire and brimstone, where there will be nothing seen or heard, but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; every of the miserable inhabitants exclaiming against themselves, and against one another; cursing the day in which they were born, the womb that bare them, and the breasts that gave them suck.

Hell is expressed, in sacred writ, by the name of *TOPHET*, Isa. xxx. 33. *Tophet is ordained of old — He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.* — 'Tis called *AVERNUS*, (*quasi sine tempore verno*) where there is no spring, no refreshing season; but an extremity of all torment and punishment, in the most violent and intense degree, which omniscience or infinite wisdom can invent, and which omnipotency, or in-

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torment; and indeed, unutterable are the torments which the damned undergoe, in that dismal place: sometimes I find this verb *καταβω* also signifying, *to press down*; and oh, how will that heavy load of God's wrath press down the impenitent world, into this bottomless gulph of endless perdition — Hell is also sometimes called an *abyss*, perhaps from *α* and *βυθς*, because this lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, is like a pit without any bottom.

finite power can inflict.—This dismal place is by some termed *INFERNUS*, by which many of the ancient fathers understood, some dark cave and dungeon under the earth, or within its bowels. But, where, and in what particular spot, this tormenting place of the damned may be; is perhaps too much bordering on presumption for men, in this world, to determine; only this we may be assured of, there is such a place, prepared for all the impenitent part of mankind; and this place is opposite to heaven, which is above, and from whence *Lucifer* was thrown down. *Zophar* represents heaven and hell as two opposites, *Job xi. 8. It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?* Oh how miserable will be the dejection, the hurling down, and tumbling headlong, of these ruined wretches, who shall be condemned to the place of torment, where they will be trampled under the wrath of almighty God for evermore! *Mal. iv. Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves in the stall; and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes, under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.* Doubtless it will not be a small ingredient in the wicked's cup, that mighty tyrants and persecuting potentates of the earth shall be trampled under foot, by these, whom they so much undervalued, contemned, and despised in this world.

Yea, assuredly, O my soul, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Oh! how deplorably wretched must these men be, who fall
under

under the omnipotent and avenging arm of JEHOVAH as the inflicter of their punishment! God is great and wonderful in all his works, and how terrible must his judgments be! *Pf. xcii. 5. O Lord how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep! He is a God of vengeance, vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord.* If God's works be full of majesty, we may hence conclude; that his hand is full of might to punish: *Jer. v. 22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail: though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.*

How severely must divine wrath at last fall upon those, who have abused God's wonderful patience, and long-suffering forbearance to them, in this life! the Lord spares men, even while they are, in this world, offering continual contempt to his blessed majesty, violating his sacred laws, rejecting his offers of mercy, and despising all his gracious invitations. — They seem to run on, in a course of sin, from day to day, and from year to year, without controul. Ay, but his patience will at last wear out; and they who now abuse it, may expect that in the life to come, the Lord will open all the stores of his wrath, and discharge the thunder-bolts of his indignation against them. Oh wretched sinner! *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* *Rom. ii. 4, 5.*

Yes, my soul, God is slow to wrath: it is long 'ere he draw the bloody sword of his vengeance; but

he strikes, he gives a fatal blow. He delays his coming in wrath for a season ; but when he comes, he will come with thighs of iron, and legs of brass, and will bruise all his incorrigible enemies *. Divine patience may wait, through many generations, until the cup of the *Amorites* be full ; but then he will rain out his fury upon them, in the greater measure Gen. xv. When Israel's sin rose, and increased to a great height ; God's righteous judgments swelled and increased also. Ezek. vii. 2, 3. *Thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel, an end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity : but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.* These awful threatnings of judgments intimate, that although the Lord spare long, yet when he strikes, he striketh with a heavy hand.

Even the consideration of divine mercy, that is both unspeakable and incomprehensible, may show how dreadful the punishment of those who abuse it, and fall a sacrifice into the hands of justice, must be †. God's mercy is high as heaven. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy truth doth reach the clouds.* —It is broad as the earth. *Lord thou preservest man and beast,* —And by the exceeding greatness of divine mercy, we may conceive of the severity of divine justice, in inflicting the dreadful punishment,

* *Ad poenam tardus Deus est, ad praemia velox ;
Sed pensare solet, vi graviore, moras.*

† Some of the fathers, were wont to call these two divine attributes, mercy and justice, the two arms of divine majesty, which, in Christ Jesus, have embraced and kissed one another.

ment; after this life, upon the wicked who are called *vasa furoris*, the vessels of his fury, upon whom he will rain down the vials of his anger, and indignation, through everlasting ages.

Oh ruined creatures! who must undergo the vengeance of almighty God, and suffer the punishment of eternal burnings! yes, O my soul, there are but two harbours in eternity, to the one or other of which, every man and woman, in the world, are now steering their course, and must arrive at, at death; either in the port of everlasting joy in heaven, or else in the lake of eternal perdition. Now, as heaven and hell are two contrary places, allotted and designed for two different sorts of persons, and that for contrary causes; so they must also be endued with contrary effects, properties, and conditions; and whatever we hear of the happiness and glory of the one, it also gives information concerning the doleful misery of the other. There is nothing a-wanting in heaven, to make its inhabitants perfectly happy; and there is not any thing a-lacking in hell, that may make its imprisoned citizens compleatly miserable.

To behold a poor fellow-creature undergoing some severe operation, that universally and extremely pains the whole body, would be a very moving object; a spectacle sufficient to melt and dissolve both heart and eye, into a flood of compassion. Ay, but how little must that appear to be, in respect of those unspeakable torments which the damned will feel, through a never-ending eternity; when all the senses, both internal and external, shall undergo the extremity of all anguish? Every member that has been used as an instrument of sin, and a weapon of unrighteousness, shall *then* be tortured with these pains, which run most contrary to the pleasures

tures and objects which wicked men delight in, in this world.

The delicate taste of the gormadizing *Epicure*, who hath made his belly his God, and feasted delicately every day, running into all the excess of riot, and refusing the poor members of Christ so much as a crumb from his table, shall in that lake be tormented with insatiable hunger and unquenchable thirst, and yet shall not have so much allowed him (although he should beg it with tears of blood) as a drop of cold water, to cool his scorched tongue, in these devouring flames.—The intemperate and irreclaimable drunkard, must then drink the bitter cup of God's wrath, warmed with everlasting fire.—The ear, that was once charmingly entertained, with ravishing musick; but always inclined to hear vanity, and listened without concern, check or rebuke, to hear the glorious and blessed name of God blasphemed, shall in hell, hear no delightful sound, but the fearful howls and roars of damned and tormented souls.—The delicate and tender nostrils, which delighted themselves with drawing in sweet fumes, odoriferous and fragrant scents, but never relished the blessed Jesus, who is elegantly stiled in scripture *the rose of Sharon and the Lillie of the valleys*, shall then be tormented, with the stench and poisonous exhalations of fire and brimstone.—The wanton and lascivious eye, that entertained itself, in viewing the objects of vanity; but never delighted to look on the law of the Lord, shall have then presented to its view, the fearful and amazing sight of ugly devils.—There, shall every wretched prisoner be tormented, with the most exquisite sense of present pain, with the dreadful apprehensions of the future punishment, from which they can never escape; and with the reflecting thoughts, upon these pleasures they

they have forfeit and lost, and these woeful miseries they have brought upon themselves.

O eternity! eternity*! what sinful wretch can think of thee, without horror? How are our weak imaginations swallowed up, in the conception! **ETERNAL!** O dreadful the case of these, who must undergo an eternal punishment, under the avenging hand of an omnipotent God! all the tormenting afflictions which any may meet with, in this world, from the hands of men, be they ever so violent and severe, will yet sometime have an end. Either the tormentor, or the tormented ceaseth to exist in time, by death; or, perhaps the affliction may be mitigated and removed, by some intervenient remedy. Yes, but eternity excludes all hopes of such remedy. In hell, the damned must ly thro' everlasting ages; they can never cease to be, and so their tormenting misery can never have an end.

Were the damned to suffer, *only* for as many millions of ages, as there are stars in heaven, grains of sand on the sea-shore, drops of water in the ocean, or piles of grass upon the earth, and *then* to be released; it were a great mitigation of their torment, and a continued ground of comfort, that after so many thousands, and ten thousands of millions of years are past, their torment would at last cease.

Ay,

- Ere the foundations of the world were laid,
Ere kindling light th' almighty word obey'd
Thou wert; and when the subterraneous flame
Shall burst its prison, and devour this frame,
From angry heaven when the keen lightning flies,
When fervent heat dissolves the melting skies,
Thou still shalt be; still as thou wert before,
And know no change when time shall be no more.
O endless thought! divine eternity!
Th' immortal soul shares but a part of thee.

Gay.

Ay, but their punishment will be eternal, they must dwell in everlasting flames, *Matth. xxv. ult.* and eternity excludes all end: so that, when numberless ages have past, their torments are as fresh, as new to begin as ever.

Oh, how unsupportable is the wrath of an almighty God! the miserable state of the damned, who fall under it, can admit of no aid, no ease, no comfort, no intermission; when they are bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, the least cooling medicine will be refused their scorched tongues—*There*, the gnawing worm of an accusing and tormenting conscience will not cease to torture, night and day, and to present to their remembrance all their former sins, that brought them to this place of torment; how will the ruined soul then cry out, in anguish, ‘Oh for mispent time! oh for another day of that gospel which I once slighted! oh for a moment’s respite! but ah—now all wishes are in vain; and here I must lie, in an inextricable gulph of misery, for evermore.’

How loudly then, O my soul,—how loudly does this evening’s meditation call on the inhabitants of the world, to take warning, when time is? O let sin, which brings on wrath, be ever the object of thy hatred and resentment! how many wretched souls are, this night, groaning under the unsupportable wrath of an angry God, who would give ten thousand worlds, was it at their command, for a part of that precious time, which I am now enjoying‡! get up then, my soul, and employ thy precious hours with application and diligence! remember, that all who die in a state of unbelief, must come to the same fatal end at last, with these that are already arrived at the harbour of eternal misery.

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‡ *Fœlix, quem faciunt aliena pericula, cautum.*

Be it ever my constant exercise, through grace, to bridle every inordinate affection, and curb every extravagant desire after sinful and carnal pleasures; for the world, and all it affords, can not counterbalance one minute's torment in the devouring flames of hell fire *. Oh that men would then stand in awe, to offend this great and terrible God, who will so severely punish the irreclaimable workers of iniquity; who will magnify his justice, in their everlasting confusion, and consume them with the breath of his nostrils.

Stand, stand, *sinner!* and reason but for a moment. Art thou a match sufficient to enter-list with thy Maker? Wilt thou not be prevailed with to lay down the weapons of thy rebellion? Art thou determined to live a slave to thine own lusts; and, at all hazards, to indulge thyself in all the pleasures of sin? Does neither the pangs of death, nor the terrors of judgment affect thee; if so, I leave to thy consideration, how thou wilt answer the question proposed by one of the Lord's prophets, Isa. xxxiii.

14. *The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites. Who amongst us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* However intollerable it is to lodge, through eternity, in that place where the flames of divine wrath will be perpetually burning; yet it must be so, that all the impenitent, unbelieving world shall dwell there; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Psal. xi. 6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain, snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.* Oh how terrible must it be to fall under the strokes of his vengeance, who can, not only kill the body, but cast both soul and body into everlasting flames!

* *Mille parit luctus, mortalibus, una voluptas.*

flames! Oh that men were now mourning for their sins, in bitterness of soul, before time be swallowed up in a boundless eternity, and be no more; before the righteous sentence be passed, that can never never be recalled! now sinners! ye have the offers of peace, mercy, and salvation, made you in the glorious gospel; now Christ is calling aloud, *look unto me, and be ye saved*—But, if the day of his patience is slighted, and all his kindly invitations are neglected; be assured, that in hell, there is no repentance, nor remission of sin to be obtained; and if the prisoners of that pit of darkness should shed as many tears of blood, as there are drops of water in the whole liquid element, it will not help nor avail; they would all be ineffectual, and to no purpose——O that God may determine every reader, timeously to ponder and lay to heart. what concerns their soul's everlasting peace! *Amen and Amen.*

A SHORT

A SHORT
ESSAY

For the REVIVAL

OF

PRAYER.

————— To heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd their way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond, or frustrate; in they pass'd
Dimensionless thro' heavenly doors. —————

PARADISE LOST.

A SHORT

E-S-A-Y

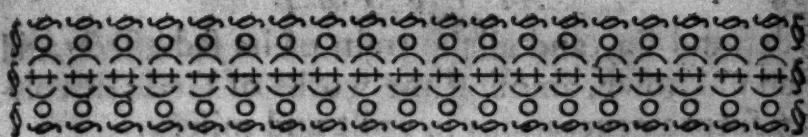
For the REVIVAL

OF

P-R-A-Y-E-R

It is the duty of every
Christian to pray for the
revival of the church in his
neighborhood.

Prayer is the



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ESSAY

For the REVIVAL

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P R A Y E R.

PRIDE and security are two of the greatest hindrances to the rise and progress of the christian's life. Both have been the occasion of the utter ruin of numberless individuals, and societies, in the world. Pride found way to insinuate itself into the celestial mansions, and was the cause of the fall of apostate angels, who kept not their first state of dependance on, and subjection to their great ORIGINAL, but would aspire to a kind of independence, or equality with God:—*them* did pride cast down from the highest pitch of glory and felicity in heaven, to the lowest degree of debasement and misery, in the bottomless pit of hell. This destructive foe did also creep into paradise; and, by inflaming our first parents with aspiring after a likeness to God in knowing good and evil, banished them from that happy place, introduced disorder

order and sin, and all the train of its sad effects, till then unknown, amongst the works of God; involving future generations in guilt and misery.

Nor is *Security* less to be guarded against, by every christian, than the odious and destructive sin of *pride*; the consequence of the one being as fatal as that of the other. The security of the old world provoked the Almighty to drown it with a deluge of water: Secure indeed *they* were, and woefully long so, that could not be roused out of that indolent and slothful state into which they were sunk, by the continual denunciations of God's anger against them, by the perpetual admonitions, and frequent warnings of *Noah*, for all that long time the ark was a-building: which was to them, if they had attended to it, a daily remembrancer of the patience of God, and a sensible warning of that general punishment and overwhelming destruction, that their daily sins and repeated crimes were heaping up for them, and which, one day, would sweep them off from the face of the earth, if they persisted, to the last, to abuse that divine patience.

If they had not been lulled into an inconceivably deep degree of security, one would think, that every knock upon the ark, while a-building, might have sounded a sufficient alarm, and abundantly advertized them to besir themselves: but, as was their's, so appears it to be the case with the generality of our day: One part entertain high and conceited notions of themselves and their attainments, to the refusing or neglecting all manner of devotion and prayer; and to the casting off all fear of God, or apprehensions of his anger: while others are so deeply sunk into security and ease, that they utterly reject all thoughts of religion, and ridicule the very name of devotion, and are not yet awakened, by all the
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judgments that God is sending abroad, among the inhabitants of a guilty world.

Thus pride and security have made men forget God, and the obligations they ly under to supplicate and adore him. Oh ! how much is prayer neglected and contemned, at this day, by some ! how carelessly, how hypocritically performed by others ! a mournful evidence this, of the degeneracy of the present generation, from the venerable piety, and solemn, unaffected devotion of our ancestors ! Poor *Scotland* ! thy once celebrated fame for piety is now gone ! Where are now the grave appearances of religion to be found, that once drew the attention, the veneration, and regard of thy neighbours ? Where that strictness and decorum of behaviour, that struck the eyes of strangers with admiration ; and afforded ample matter of the justest praise to the historian ; even the praise of virtue and devotion ? All, all is gone ; Devotion hath almost left our land, or soon perhaps will leave it. Few, extremely few concern themselves about it ; only a saint of God here, and another there, to be found in the isle of our nativity, whose souls run hard after God ; or ascend to heaven on the wings of devotion ! few, whose hearts vehemently pant after heavenly light and virtue, in all the fervour and solemnity of holy prayer ! whose night-watches, retirements, and places of fellowship and intercourse with God, may attest the frequency of their religious exercises ! while, alas ! the far greater part of this generation ; the degenerate sons of their pious ancestors ; to their own disgrace, to the discredit of their reputation with wiser and better posterity, and to their own unspeakable loss, do entirely neglect the duty of prayer, blush and are ashamed to be found employed in it, and proceed to treat it with insolent scorn and contempt.

'Tis the alarming of these latter, as well as the encouragement of the former, that is here intended.

While enquiring into the nature and necessity of prayer, I propose not to startle the reader, with any thing that may be thought too nice, or curious for such a rugged attempt.—That prayer consists in presenting our supplications before a throne of grace, for things agreeable to the divine will, and this only in the name of Christ, humbly bewailing our own guilt, and gratefully acknowledging our receipt of unmerited favours from heaven, is what I presume will not be questioned. The foundation of the duty of prayer is deeply laid in our nature, as we are men, that is, as needy and dependent creatures, insufficient for promoting their own happiness, and entirely depending upon their *Maker* for life, and breath, and all things. It is scarce necessary to take notice here, that prayer presupposeth a firm and serious belief, and an affecting sense of the being and perfections of God: since it must be extremely obvious to every one, 'that none can come unto God, without first believing that he *is*;' and not only must the worshipper be persuaded that God exists (from the visible works of his hands, the heavens and the earth, which, to every attentive rational mind, proclaim his eternal power and god-head,) but also be convinced of *what he is*, or know what qualities he is possessed of, that render him the worthy object of adoration, love, and confidence. That he is possesst of almighty power, unerring wisdom, unbounded goodness, spotless purity, inflexible and impartial justice, and never-failing truth: that he is that great and good Being, whose glory no eye can behold, whose greatness no thought can comprehend, whose power no force can resist; from whose presence no swiftness can fly, from whose knowledge no secret can be hid, whose justice no art can evade, and of whose goodness

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all creatures partake. In short, that he is the Maker of heaven and earth, the Author of all existence; that he is the Preserver, the Benefactor, the Governor, and the Supreme Judge of the world.

With this belief of a Supreme Being, is necessarily connected adoration and praise. For, not to acknowledge a Deity, by religious acts of worship, is, in effect, to deny the existence of one altogether. It is the same thing to the neglecter and contemner of prayer, as if there was no God ruling over the universe. Hence the name of such persons, is, *Atheists*, who live without God; and their character given by the Psalmist, is that of *fools*, who *say in their hearts, there is no God*:—because *they call not upon the Lord*.

To adoration and praise, is joined prayer and supplication. The acknowledgment of a divine Being exacts these several exercises of religious worship.

That it is the indispensable duty of all rational beings, to *call upon the Lord*; that this subject requires our attention, and that this important duty must not be shuffled, by any frivolous excuses, or lingering delays, will appear from a variety of considerations.

God claims a just right and uncontrollable title, to the tribute of all worship, here and hereafter, in time and through eternity. *Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God*. This will be the endless exercise of the angelic tribes, and all the heavenly hierarchy, *Who rest not day and night, saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty, who was, and is, and is to come—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power.—* 'Tis the express command of heaven; *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*. Hence that salutary counsel from the mouth of an infalli-

ble prophet; *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.* And will ye adventure to treat the sacred institution, with an intire neglect thereof, or run the risk of slighting it? The damned, who now roar out of the lake that *for ever burneth with fire and brimstone*, had once the same entreaties you now have, to approach a throne of mercy; but they slighted the day of grace, and must therefore eternally ly under the insupportable load of divine vengeance: finding, at the great day, the judge quite implacable, his justice inflexible, his mercy for ever shut up, and their own misery to admit of no remedy, they will then cry out, in the excess of anguish and torment, *to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* And, think ye God is any respecter of persons? No, no, if ye continue and persevere pursuing the same paths, must they not inevitably lead you to the same fatal end, the same dismal prison; where, though the extremity of pain may alarm you to cry, when 'tis too late, yet God will then give a deaf ear, and all access betwixt heaven and the miserable inhabitants of the infernal regions will be for ever block't up? oh, dare not now to trifle, while God is expostulating with you.—Further, for your encouragement to this exercise, infallible veracity has engaged to answer the prayer of faith; faithful is he that hath promised, *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Yea, with the strongest asseveration is the important truth confirmed, *Verily verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* Let the centurion's servant, Mat. viii. 5, 14. Let the daughter of the Canaanitish woman, Mat. xv. 22, 29. bear lasting record, and stand perpetual evidences of the happy fruit and result of prayer. The

The straits and difficulties that attend every scene of life might, methinks, discover the necessity of frequent and fervent prayer. Have you not numberless wants, which you cannot supply? Don't you groan under manifold imperfections, which you can't remove? Don't you find yourselves incapable to crown your own labours after wealth, after honour, after knowledge, and virtue, with success? And while there is a great and good Being, whose original and unbounded goodness for ever *disposeth* him, and whose all-sufficiency doth abundantly *qualify* him, to bestow for *Christ's* sake every needful blessing upon you, if you will but comply with the institution he hath appointed of conferring those benefits you stand in need of, viz. asking them from him, in faith and sincerity: will you contemn and neglect this great duty of prayer and supplication? Alas! however manifold your straits are, you do not come to God to get them relieved. No, ye children of poverty, it is from other quarters you wickedly expect relief. God is the last refuge *only*, to whom you have recourse. Seldom or never do you fly to Him, or fall down on your knees before him, until, after your oratory to the world is exhausted, and your cries and tears can draw no compassion, and all other methods fail, you find at last, that *vain is the help of man*. When you look on your right hand, and behold there is no man that will know you, when refuge fails you, and no man careth for your soul; then perhaps (like the Psalmist when in such a situation) you will cry unto the Lord, and say, *O Lord, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living: attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low*. But at other times, God is not in all your thoughts. You consider not who gives you bread to eat, water to drink, and raiment, such as it is, to put on: but are unmindful of your great Sup-

porter, and soon forget, like the children of *Israel*, Him who is the rock of your salvation, that oftentimes delivered you, and fed you to the full. Ah base ingratitude! amazing folly! To be such a needy and depending creature on the providence of God, as to be obliged in the most literal sense to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*, and yet wilt forget thy gracious God, nor ever bow thy knee unto him.

Nor are the rich and the great under less obligation to this duty of prayer, because of their riches and grandeur, but they are under greater and stronger ties. For however much they may be vainly puffed up (as they too frequently are) with pride, and looking on themselves as some way independent, putting on an air of importance, and counting it a low and unfashionable thing to pray; yet, a due consideration of things might serve to correct that false taste, and wrong notion of politeness and grandeur, which leads them to despise, and neglect this important duty—What is it, pray; that sets you above the need of prayer? are ye more exempt from poverty and distress than others? who made thee to differ from another? was it not God? and can you refuse to acknowledge his goodness? how soon may he deprive thee of thine estate, thy power, thy grandeur, and put thee on a level with the meanest beggar? Are there not instances to be met with in history, of such sudden changes, from plenty to poverty, from honour to disgrace, from power to dependance? Nay, instances to be found within the compass of thy own memory, and perhaps in the course of thy own life? and may not that which hath been, still be? may not God, for thy ingratitude, be provoked to deprive thee of all, that thou mayest learn to acknowledge thy dependance on his kind and universal care?

But the great and the rich, finding few changes in their lot, are apt to forget God. It is this that
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makes them swell in their vain imaginations, and to fancy themselves independent of providence. But, oh sirs, you act very unjustly : there is the more need to acknowledge the goodness of God, that your condition is great and noble, and always the same. But you wickedly turn that, which ought to be the greatest incitement to prayer, into an excuse for neglecting it. The number, the greatness, the continuance, together with the undeservedness of the favours you receive from the kind hand of providence, are so far from being a reason for forgetting the great and good giver of them, that they are the justest, the strongest, and the most powerful reason imaginable, for acknowledging his *paternal* love.—You have many examples of great and good beings, to encourage you to prayer. The angels, who excell the grandest creatures upon earth, do not think it below them, but rather a piece of dignity and glory, to fall down before the throne of God, ascribing unto him all honour and praise. The wisest, richest, best and greatest princes upon earth, have thought it no disparagement to their royalty, to bow the knee before him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords: this was the practice of king *Solomon*, and of *David* king of Israel. One of whom made a nobler and grander figure, when bowing before the most high God, at the head of his numerous host, than ever the most illustrious prince made, in the midst of his greatest grandeur, with ten thousands at his heels, marching in all the pride and pomp of war.—But above all, the pattern set before us, in the life of our glorious Emmanuel, calls us to this duty ; this was his frequent exercise, *When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.* ---Nor does the brevity and uncertainty of our abode in time, sound a despicable alarm for travellers on the coasts of mortality, thus to be constantly aspiring

ing heaven-ward; hence that pathetic petition, *O spare me that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more.* The sacred oracle assures us, *'Tis appointed for all men once to die.* 'Tis the fixt and irreverfible decree of heaven, that each of *Adam's* family, bid an everlafting adieu to the fleeting pleasures of a world, and launch out into the bottomlefs and boundlefs depth of an everlafting eternity. Oh eternity, eternity! will not the amazing thoughts of thee, ftrike the carelefs finner to the quick? No tongue can exprefs, no thought can conceive, thy infinite extent, O endlefs everlafting eternity! yet alas, alas, how are the important thoughts of thee thruft out of the carelefs finner's breaft, as if his thoughtlefsnefs of thee could extinguifh thy being! No, mortals, no: You are ever drawing nearer and nearer the immense ocean, and launch forth into it ye muft at laft, whether you will think of it or no. The grand fcenes of providence, Death, Eternity and Judgment (being undoubtedly to happen) cannot be thought away, by a carelefs, inconfiderate mind. Sinner, finner, thou mayeft as wifely imagine, that thy winking hard, when about to throw thyfelf headlong, from the top of a fteep and dangerous precipice, would hinder thee from falling, or avert the deftruction thou wert rufting upon; as to imagine, that thy thoughtlefsnefs about death, judgment, and eternity, will hinder them from happening, or make their effects lefs terrible to thee in the end.—And canft thou, O man, feeing thyfelf a poor ignorant dying creature; lyable every moment of thy fhort life, to be hurried off this ftage into eternity, where thou knoweft not what may befall thee, with whom thou fhalt affociate thyfelf, or what thou fhalt be? Canft thou refrain from praying to the author of thy being, as long as thou liveft, that he will be pleafed to fupport thee, thro' life; comfort thee in a dying hour;

hour ; and be thy God, thy guide, and portion for ever ?— This is thy duty ; but oh ! how is it performed ? These thoughts are too serious ; they cast a gloom over your brighter gaieties ; they give you pain ; and we know how they will be entertained ;—are you not going to dismiss them (as *Felix did Paul*) with, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*. Every one finds some excuse or other, to delay the important duty.—The gentleman of fashion has his company to entertain, his diversion to pursue, or his domestic affairs to mind.—The man of business is hurried in the pursuit of the world, and must see to his secular concerns.—The statesman, he must receive and pay visits to his fellow-senators, confer with them about matters of state : his head, his heart, his time, are so filled up with politics, that the busy patriot has no time to spare for paying his devotions to God, or begging the blessing of heaven on his schemes for the common weal : without whose blessing, all his projects may be disconcerted, and fail of success. — The enterprising ambitious man, has his eye fixt on worldly glory ; on pomp, and power ; his aims are not at the heavens, where the highest and most dazzling glory is fixed, to draw up the eyes and hearts of truly noble, great, and generous men : But his views are directed to a much lower and inferior glory, namely to an eminence of earthly power, a certain pitch of elevation above the herd of mankind, to which he vehemently aspires, and scrambles up to, with all his might.—The soldier ; his head is full of camps, battles, sieges, the waving lustre and gleam of armour, the pompous pride, and march of armies, with all the other martial ideas of war ; his time, from morning till night, is wholly taken up, with such diversions, such company, and thoughts, as he foolishly deems peculiar to that
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station in life, without offering perhaps one single attempt to quell the mutiny of his passions, to command his unruly appetites that war within him, or to beg of God, in prayer, that he would teach him to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ : without which important lesson, he carries about with him a mean and dastardly soul, void of true valour, notwithstanding his vain pretensions to it ; and is incapable of serving his king and country, like the virtuous hero ; for greatness without goodness, is like the body without the soul.

But the duty of prayer is neglected, not only by men, but by women also. The polite-female ; she must instantly dress, and prepare for returning the other day's visit, and cannot now obtain leisure for her private devotions.——These thoughts, she is afraid, will render her too dull and morose for being a gay companion, or will tarnish the beauty and brisk features of her complexion. But in this, the lady is greatly mistaken. Devotion, instead of impairing her beauty, would increase it : it would create such a solemn and heavenly air in her countenance, as would make her a thousand times more amiable than the fairest daughter of *Eve* can be without it. The jovial humour she puts herself in, the gaieties of dress wherewith she adorns herself, the good breeding, and easiness of behaviour she has learned, as an art ; these may, without devotion, create a kind of admiration, in the minds of those who are not perfect judges. But, there is as wide a difference betwixt this artificial beauty of theirs, and that which devotion would inspire, as there is betwixt a florid piece of painting, and the gravest and most natural colours of the best masters. Ye busy females, whose sole care is to dress yourselves that you may appear to advantage, be persuaded to try this beautifying art of devotion, and you'll find
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another sort of charms spreading themselves in your countenances. What can more inspire you with tranquillity, evenness, modesty, and regularity of complexion (in which beauty consists) than these inward acts of admiration of the grandeur and excellence of God, of loving and praising his goodness, and trusting in his providence; all which devotion would inspire? The ideas of grandeur, nobility, and elevation above the common level, give you a genteel air at present; and these ideas (like a full and undisturbed river shewing its depth and majesty in its clear, transparent, beautiful surface) show themselves to advantage, in the features of your countenance: how much more elevated would your minds be, and consequently more beautiful your features, would you accustom yourselves to prayer? But alas! say what we will, 'tis to be feared you will account us but officious monitors. You will take your own method still; and, for want of thought, or consideration of the dismal consequences that attend the neglect of prayer, you will perhaps, after reading these exhortations, return to your former course of idling away your time, in paying unnecessary visits, or in a labour of the tongue about nothing. Unhappy females! the time, the time is coming, when you will wish too late, that you had been oftner employed in prayer to your Maker, than engaged in such idle amusements! you may now thrust out those thoughts, as impertinent and unmannerly molesters of your gaiety and wit; but will you do so, when ye come to die? No, no; death, and the fearful apprehensions of eternity, will inspire you with other thoughts. Oh what a dismal case will the she-atheist then be in?—Her mind, conscious of the existence of a Deity, by the direful forebodings of his wrath to come; must be unexpressibly uneasy, when she reflects that God had not been in all her thoughts,
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but that she had lived all her life-long, in the habitual neglect of that devotion, she ought to have paid unto him? Where is now the sprightliness of her wit, the gaiety of her temper, and the pride of her beauty? Let them now deliver her, seeing she trusted in them. *'Ah they have taken away my gods, and what shall I do?'*--In fine, every one finds this, that, or the other obstruction and hindrance in the way, till the fit season, the proper opportunity for prayer, is past and gone. What dismal throws, what direful pangs, what shocking convulsions such delays have created, on a death bed, annual experience may discover! and whether the critical period may hurry on to morrow, or suspend its approach for some years hence, these unthinking wretches are not apprized. *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistned with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.* Hence the salutary advice. *Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. Ye that say to day or to morrow, we will go into such a city, we will perform such a duty, ye know not what shall be on the morrow.* While sojourning in tents of mortality, ye are only tenants at will, and whether to morrow or next day, a summons may be put into your hands, none can inform you.

Nor is the particular place, whence ye may be hurried less uncertain—*Abel* is surprized in the field.—*Eli*, by the way side.—*Job's* children at their feast.—*Eglon*, in his parlour.—*Zacharias*, between the temple and the altar.—*Senacherib*, when worshipping in the house of Nisroch.—*Isbhoseth*, in his bed-chamber.—*The Philistines*, sporting upon the theatre. *Herod*, upon his throne. THE manner of our exit is equally concealed from our knowledge; *Josiah* is killed by an arrow.—*The Prophet*, by a lion.—

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Ahimelech, by the fall of a stone. — The *Captains*, with their fifties, by fire from heaven. — NEITHER the bloom of youth, the vigour of manhood, nor the sagacity of old age can pretend to prognosticate, when the fatal messenger may be sent on the momentous expedition, nor which of the innumerable instruments of death may receive instructions, instantly to dispatch thee, O sinner, from the society of men, from the season of prayer. And why, ah mortals, why will ye yet dally, why so anxious to hurry away your precious moments in folly, and lose, for ever lose, the golden opportunity ye now enjoy? ONCE MORE, Do but call to remembrance the many advantages arising to yourselves, from a suitable performance of this duty; and let this bespeak your attention, and bestir you to set about it. What are the happy fruits of the solemn exercise? 'Tis one of the means of divine institution for easing our hearts, and staying our staggering steps that are ready to slip into impatience; 'tis an excellent mean of preserving from entering into temptation, or falling into sin; it inciteth us to holiness, it raiseth us from earth to heaven, it inspireth us with magnanimity, it promotes tenderness and goodwill to men; 'tis the happy mean of obtaining mercy from God, and of averting threatened judgment. When our hearts are full, must it not ease them, to pour them out in prayer to God, telling him our complaint, and representing our case before him? Can any thing be a more powerful mean to silence all discontent and murmurings against providence, or more effectually contribute to produce evenness and tranquillity of mind, than to cast ourselves, in humble prayer, on the providence of that great and good Being, who is the confidence of the ends of the earth, and the sovereign disposer of all events? must not a sense of the majesty, the purity, and presence of God,

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which we endeavour to have imprinted upon our minds, in the exercise of devotion; must not this lead us to beware of offending that Supreme Being, whom we own, admire and adore?

Pray ye therefore, that ye enter not into temptation. Let the same heavenly and devout mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. And watch ye and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass; and to stand before the Son of man; praying with all prayer and supplication.—Let your requests be made known unto the Lord; and while you ascend to heaven in prayer, *truly* your fellowship will be with the *Father*, and with his son Jesus Christ.

Nor will the necessity of prayer appear less, in regard of others, than of ourselves; does not the deplorable case of our brethren, our friends, our neighbours, our acquaintances, yea of our very enemies, call us to this exercise? Do we visit such as are confined to a sick-bed? Does the groans of a dying relation affect us? Does the ghastly looks, the pale visage, that some days ago, was sprightly and blooming, pierce our hearts, and draw tears from our eyes?

We may, indeed, stand by as mournful spectators, but cannot extenuate the corroding pain, nor recover the wonted strength of our expiring friend. Yet, even in this case, prayer is an excellent mean of reilef: By this did *Moses* stand before God in the breach, to turn away his wrath from *Israel*. Again, the power and policy of your adversaries sound an alarm to this duty: we have to grapple with, and encounter against no contemptible, no inconsiderable foe,——An alluring world, with ten thousand snares seeks to entrap us,—The old serpent watches to embrace every opportunity for our ruin, and continually compasseth the earth,

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seeking whom he can destroy.—What hostile legions, what prevalent corruptions swarm in our breasts, lurk in our deceitful hearts, (if we are not entire strangers to ourselves) mournful experience may discover unto us ! would we be preserved from the seduction of these spiritual *Amalekites*, let our cries be with the *Psalmist*, *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies.*

Is it verily so ? Is prayer thus necessary, in regard of its positive divine institution — in regard of our selves and others ? Get up, ye careless indolent ones ; stand and tremble, ye contemners of religious worship ! did our Lord, in the days of his humiliation, *Offer up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears ;* And think ye, Heaven will dispense with your neglect of this sacred exercise, or sustain your trifling excuses, before his tremendous bar ? no, you are expressly assured of the contrary, and your doom (in case of persisting in your prayerless state) is declared in that awful message, *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, — I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind.*

And the prophet by the inspiration of the Almighty, imprecates this awful denunciation against every prayerless, who is in effect a godless wretch, *Pour out thine anger on those that know thee not, and on them who call not on thy name.* Harken to thy doom, O prayerless man, and tremble !—Poor dust and ashes ! what can exalt thee above the need of prayer ? Look upon thy nothingness, thy puny contemptible condition, which, in comparison of the spacious universe, (the workmanship of that God thou despisest) doth entirely disappear, and dwindle into nothing : think on the dust, thy mighty original ;

nal; observe the grave and corruption to be, ere-long, thy dwelling; and then say, whether thou hast just cause to boast thyself of that borrowed existence thou carriest about with thee; to pride thyself in the poor, uncertain, earthly grandeur, thou, for a moment before thy returning to dust, art posselt of; whether such a poor nothing ought to pique itself on a kind of imaginary independence, cast off all fear of God, neglect to own its dependence on his bounty and care? No, let no pride of the grandest monarch, let not the grandeur of the noblest subject, make them to esteem it below their character, or a diminishing their rank and dignity, to prostrate themselves and families, before the throne of God; nor let the most abject slave fear to venture on the important task. Neither the grandeur of the one, nor the meanness of the other will excuse the neglect of paying this just tribute to heaven. And can these expect God will ever bestow the glory of his kingdom, upon such as think it not worth asking? No, no, such stubborn wretches, who contemn prayer, may now find it an easy matter to deceive themselves, to put the cheat on their own souls, by presenting a bundle of fair glittering promises; but they will at last find, to their experience, they have to do with a God, who will not be mocked, by their wickedness, and who cannot be deceived, by empty pretensions.

True, what I have *sometimes* been witness to, in course of conversation, brings to my remembrance, what the profane wit of this depraved age, may be apt, with a flouting jeer, to tell us, ‘To what purpose is prayer enjoined, seeing God knows what we stand in need of, without asking, and has, by an eternal decree, infallibly determined whatever comes to pass?’ And must the institution of Heaven be justified out, by such atheistical sophistry? It certainly is so, the secrets of every heart are naked before him,

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whose all-seeing eye is constantly upon us, but will it hence follow, we must put up no petition to heaven? Strange inference!—Although God, whom we pray to, doth know all our wants, from his perfect knowledge of every thing, that passeth through the wide and extensive empire of the universe; yet this does not hinder, but that we must represent our case before him. 'Tis his own appointment, and we, as his creatures and subjects, ought to comply with it. And indeed it is not an arbitrary but a very wise, kind, and just appointment. As all his precepts to his creatures, are calculated to promote the supreme felicity of those that obey them; so this injunction of prayer, is a most rational one, and serves the most excellent purposes. — We come not indeed before God, to lay out our case, as if he was formerly unacquainted therewith; but hereby shew forth, and declare our submission to his sacred command, our obedience to his divine will. Christ tells us for our encouragement to come, and call on our heavenly Father by prayer, that he knoweth already, *we stand in need of all these things.*—The prophet *Elias* promises *Ahab* rain, not at random, but as privy to the Lord's purpose, and certified of his will, yet falls prostrate on the ground, and wrestles earnestly in prayer, for obtaining it. Shall men pursue every mean, conducing to promote their secular interest; deem all their unwearied diligence and incessant labour, little enough toil for accumulating provision to a tottering body, that must e're long crumble into dust, and become a prey to the worms; and is there no spare hours, for seeking after supply to the immortal soul that must soon wing its flight, into the regions of eternal well or woe?

Next, let us enquire, how we must send thither our prayers; how the duty may be rightly perform-

ed, claims our particular attention. A formal round of duties, a few hurried essays of this nature, will not be a sacrifice acceptable to God, *For unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth.* If ye would offer up an acceptable sacrifice to heaven, and expect a favourable answer from thence, endeavour to obtain a deep sense of your own emptiness and unworthiness, a lively feeling of your misery, a discovery of your natural depravity, a just apprehension of your innumerable enemies, and how obnoxious you are become to a severe but just punishment from the righteous judge of all the earth, on account of your bypast folly and sin; and having recourse to the mercies of God in Christ to sincere penitents, crying with the dejected, humbled, and self-condemned *Publican*, God be merciful to me a sinner.——*With the centurion*, Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.——*With Daniel*, We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.——*With David*, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.——*With Isaiah*, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.——*And with Jeremiah*, O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake.

Take a due and serious consideration, of what ye are in quest of, how expedient these things may be for you, and whether your obtaining them, may tend to the advancement of God's glory, to the good of others, or to your soul's real interest: If this is not in view, your service will provoke, but not please God. To rush inconsiderately before the throne, is only a deriding the king of glory,——Nor need ye look for obtaining, what he has not promised to
grant

grant; an humble submission, a tame resignation to the determination of unsearchable wisdom, must necessarily accompany every petition. A profound ignorance, an hurried precipitance are bars, that frequently obstruct a favourable reply, and are reproved by our Lord's answer, to the mother of Zebedee's children, who came worshipping, and said, *Grant these my two sons may sit the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. To this purpose are the words of the inspired penman, Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.*

Discover yourselves to be in earnest with the Lord, in prayer: 'Tis not a few cold desires, or indifferent wishes that can obtain your requests; your earnestness cannot indeed work any change in the breast of God, as it does move the compassion of men, towards those that importune them; nor can it make God more willing than he was before, to assist you, or do you good; but notwithstanding of all this, such earnestness is absolutely necessary, to testify and increase our value for the good things we ask of him; without which, the conferring them upon us, would perhaps do us but small service. And therefore our gracious God hath allowed us to use earnestness and importunity with him. Hence the Psalmist addressed the Lord, *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up**, Ps. v. 3. Yet the Searcher of hearts doth not regard the mere oratory of the tongue, nor all the most eloquent expressions of earnestness and fervour, if the whole be only a counterfeit appearance, with design to

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יְהוָה בְּקֶרֶךְ חֲשָׁמַיִם קוֹלִי בְּקֶרֶךְ אֶעֱרֹךְ לֵךְ וְאֶצְפָּה

The Hebrew word **וְאֶצְפָּה** (which comes from **צָפַח**) implies a looking up with anxiety or desire, till the request is granted.

gain a character in the world as religious; or to compensate the breach of our dutys to God, the world, and ourselves. No, no, such prayers are an abomination to the Lord. If we would pray to purpose, our hearts as well as our lips, must be in earnest, and our whole lives, whether in private or publick, must be led in such a holy manner as that the tenor of our conversation, whether we be actually praying or not, may be one perpetual song of praise unto God.

Deliberately survey the insufficiency of all sublunary things, for gratifying the desires of an immortal soul; was the whole creation your own; was the whole rational part of the glorious system of universal existence your intimate friends, your kind benefactors; did your treasures consist of the most opulent stores, the wide creation can afford; yet, in the whole, there's a great insufficiency: one thing, a *momentuous* one thing is lacking to compleat your felicity. And the more empty-handed ye come before God, the more life and efficacy will your prayers be likely to have.—He that suspecteth to obtain relief at home, will readily with more earnest desire, send his suit for supply from abroad. View the whole fabrick of the universe, cast your eyes around, and behold this globe the place of our habitation, as if ye were instantly to bid an adieu, to all its transitory favours; consider of thy self, as if (e're another opportunity for this duty may offer) thou mayest be grappling in the pangs of death, when thy friends may stand by as dismal beholders, sorrowing for thee, bemoaning thy early departure, but utterly incapable to afford relief, or prevent the approach of the formidable foe; when thou mayest justly cry and complain, *Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.*

Let your affections be ardent and warm, that
your

your devotion may not be esteemed lip-labour and will-worship, flowing from a cool and frozen heart; *For the sacrifices of God are a broken and a contrite spirit.* What energy of language is wrapt up, in the Psalmist's words, whose heart panted after God, as the chased *hart* panteth after the water-brooks! as the parched ground, withered by the continued gale or sultry beams, widens its rents, and cleaves asunder; discovering an ardent thirst for a refreshing shower, opens its mouth, as if it would devour the clouds, and swallow the ocean; so let the ardency of your affections, be ever panting heavenward, for refreshing influences from above.—Nor must ye prostrate yourselves, but in the profoundest reverence and humility, possessed with suitable apprehensions of that infinite Majesty, before whom ye make your solemn appearance; being assured, that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Alas! how a spirit of pride prevails in our day, is too obvious to escape the notice of every discerning eye! And what exalts you, proud mortals?—Royalty itself will e're long be debased; the king of terrors, and terror of kings fears not to attack the royal palace, to seize the potent Monarch, to wrest the *diadem* from his head, and pull the scepter out of his hand; how much less may the highest peer expect to be exalted, from exchanging an handsome lodging for a nauseous tomb? The charming features, the engaging smiles, the blooming looks of the delicate fair, will be no more, when the once adorned, and admired carcase, becomes a prey to the greedy reptile! The robust constitution will at length be stript of its strength, the avaritious miser spoiled of every bag.

Pray in the faith of being heard; he that cometh to God, must not only believe that *he is*, but that *he is* the hearer of prayer: *God hath sent forth the spirit*

spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father. Persuaded that your heavenly Father will not refuse your request, nor deny your suits, you may with all boldness, in faith, call upon him. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.—Let him ask in faith nothing wavering.—What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Yet must ye not be entire judges for yourselves, but in imitation of the Leper, discover your desires ever subordinate to the divine will, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.—Let constancy, hope and patience be in continual exercise, till ye obtain a gracious return. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Are ye serious in your devotion, or, do ye only trifle in modes of religion, without aspiring after the spirit of prayer, and so become mockers of God, as well as deceivers of your own souls? If the last is not your case, the Psalmist's practice is worthy your imitation, who waited patiently for the Lord, till he heard his cry.—Neither must ye be discouraged, though a midnight hour should require your attention, to wrestle until the breaking of the day ††.—Pray in the spirit of meekness, disburdened of all malice and wrath. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Draw near to God in the spirit of meekness and humility, and he will draw near to you; cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. But oh! how repugnant to this sacred admonition, is the humour of such miscreants, who pine with fretting malice, and utter virulent calumnies against their fellows; which in a little introduces a superior degree of wickedness, in imprecating wrath, and pleading for vengeance, upon every apprehended injury! hold, viperous tongue, lest

lest *God destroy thee for ever*, and mischief be returned on thine own head : see a reproof sent thee from heaven, *Matth. v. and vi. chap.*

An holy awe and filial dread of the infinite Majesty, before whom ye approach, may serve to becalm all the turbulent commotions of intestine foes, in the soul. *David* charges his son *Solomon* to know, *that the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thought.* So the Lord speaks of himself to the church of *Thyatira*, *I am he that searcheth the reins, and the heart.*—This is the God before whom ye appear, this is the great *I am that I am*, before whose throne ye list yourselves.—Consider it, ye worshippers of the most high God, and let the remembrance thereof excite in you a holy fear, and reverential dread,——Think of it, O formalists, and attempt not to trifle with him, who is of infinite Majesty to astonish you, of omnipotent power to disarm you, of inflexible justice to proceed against you. *Consider this, ye that forget God. If the wrath of a king is as the messengers of death*, what must the wrath of the King of kings be?—The damned have already sadly experienced, that it verily *is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Let the eye of faith be fixt on the promises of a God in Christ:——And O believers, what prodigious stores are here wrapt up ! what immense treasures to be unfolded to your view ! what soul so dead or languid, what heart so *adamantine* ; whose affections so stiff and frozen, as not to glow, and be charmed at such a ravishing sight ! the whole treasure of heaven is wrapt up in a bundle of promises, and every promise secures it for you. However quickly passing, let me present a few before your eyes, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*——*And it shall come to pass,*

pass, that before they call I will answer, and whilst they are speaking I will hear. Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Fear not to venture your all, ten thousand souls, if ye had them, upon the faithfulness of infallible veracity,—The devil will deceive you, the world and your own hearts will beguile you, friends and neighbours may disappoint you; but, were all the heavenly hierarchy to declare their experience of divine fidelity, they would with harmonious consent, set their seal thereunto. Witness, O celestial choir! witness ye saints, that are yet in a state of imperfection, travelling the coasts of mortality, advancing toward the heavenly mansions, *That he who has spoken cannot lie.*

Once more, Let all your suits at a throne of grace, discover your complacency, and acquiescence in the divine will, and presume not to limit the holy One, either as to the time, the place, or the manner of granting your requests. What a noble and ever memorable pattern, has our glorious high-priest set before us, to this purpose, in his solitary prayer, a little before the grand traitor approaches, with the audaciously impious band; when his human soul was almost sunk within him, besieged and surrounded with grief, * while he groans under the tremendous blow, encounters all the magazine of heaven's wrath, stands exposed to such storms of divine vengeance, as was sufficient to have hurled ten thousand worlds into the lowest abyss of misery, or reduced them into mere nothing! after the most melting cries of a burdened spirit, the most resigned submission to his father's will, and steady resolution to stand to every article of the eternal covenant, appears

* So the original bears *περιλυπος ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου* Matth. xxvii. 38.

pears in a dialect, truly becoming a bleeding Saviour, a slain Lamb! *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.*——I might here multiply particulars, that would swell this short essay, beyond intended limits.

——By the by, we may drop a tear, in lamenting, how carelessly and indifferently this duty of prayer is performed, by the bulk of this generation: what spiritual pride, what arrogant presumption, what lifeless formality, what down-right hypocrisy obtains among professors, at this day? I may appeal to the conversation of too too many, that bear the name, as language abundantly expressive of the mournful truth! doth not the practice of many intimate to the world, that they can modulate the duties of religion according to the taste of every company, and use an equal freedom with the sacred laws of Christianity, as might be allowed in fashioning their dress, to the common form of a country? Again, does not a bent anxiety to hurry over the duty, discover a kind of confinement, during its last; while the neglect of preparative means, incontestibly displays the spiritual blindness of a professing age?

Nothing can be indeed of higher importance, than considering, to whom, and through whom, we may address ourselves in prayer,—God alone is the object of all worship, one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; to this no created existence, neither saints, nor angels can lay any claim. God challenges this to himself, exclusive of all others, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*——*Go not after other Gods, to serve them.* The prophets of *Baal* cryed aloud, and cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets,——*Yet there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.* No wonder to see such as cry unto idols, baffled of all their hopes, disappointed of all their expectations, for these never did,

did, nor can give their votaries ground to look for assistance from them. 'Tis only the God of heaven, who knows the exigencies of his supplicants; 'tis his only prerogative, to be καρδιωγός one who searches the secret recesses of the heart. —

Angels and saints have declined worship, and refused it as competent to be paid to them. *I fell at his feet to worship him; and he said unto me, see thou do it not.* Whence appears the daring impiety of such, as direct their prayers to wrong objects, whether angels, saints, or what possibly never in nature, had a being.

Again, 'Tis in, and through Christ alone, we may present our petitions, before a throne of grace, and upon his merits only, may we plead for any favour. Since our fall and apostacy, in the first of men, we stand at variance with heaven, and without a Mediator, no access can be obtained, no amiable intercourse can possibly take place. Nor is it less evident, from the sacred records, that the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only Mediator, between God and man; he alone is the golden altar upon which our sacrifices are to be offered, by which they become perfumed, and obtain a sweet relish in God's nostrils. The apostle strikes at the very root, razes the basis and foundation of that antisciptural doctrine, which teaches a plurality of Mediators; *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Let none dare to ascribe this honour to creatures, even of the first rank, which by so express divine testimony, is due only to our glorious *Emmanuel*.—While the refined moralist pleads for a reward of his own performance, may my hopes and expectations be ever founded on the death, and satisfaction of my dear Redeemer,—while the blind idolater, while the obstinate sinner flies to a refuge, that cannot secure them, from the wrath to come; may

may all the stress and dependance of what I claim, be founded upon the merits and mediation of a bleeding Saviour,—of a slain Lamb.—And fear not, O my soul, to cast thy burden upon him; the Spirit of God gives thee a sufficient warrant, *If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Let not the subtle stratagems, and glittering devices of men presume to aspire, above the unerring infallible wisdom of God; nor need any deem it presumption, for rebel sinners of mankind, to come and plead upon the merits of Christ's death; the king himself invites and expostulates with rebellious criminals, yea, in the most affecting manner complains, *and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* Fly not to his servants and domesticks, when the king warrants you, to approach the royal throne, in your own person, through the blood of his Son.—Let not the enthusiastick delusions, the chimerical notions of a misinformed judgment, or a delirious brain, intermix themselves, with the wholesome doctrine of the everlasting gospel.—Let thy resentment, O my soul, discover itself, in refusing for ever to give that glory to images, that belongs only to thy Redeemer; let the Lamb slain be my only refuge, from all the thunderbolts of divine wrath; let this invaluable blood be the only medicine, for removing the defilement of every duty; the only argument, to plead upon for my justification, before the bar of inflexible justice—Pause here a little, *believers*, ponder the sublime subject, admire the lofty mystery, of an incarnate God! meditate on the celestial theme, view your glorious high-priest, in his amazing condescension, and see sufficient matter of wonder, if ye are not transported so as, in rapture, to cry out, *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh!* lift up, lift

lift up your eyes, and behold him who came down from heaven, to procure access for exiled criminals, for condemned malefactors, again to approach a throne of mercy——He came, he came, who was full of glory from everlasting, and would have for ever remained so, though all the race of *Adam* had been lost, in endless ruin! 'tis he, who makes the clouds his swift running chariots, whose name *JEHOVAH*, is terrible among the heathen; 'tis he, who sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before him; yet he came from the bosom of his Father, into the womb of a virgin. O amazing condescension!

Again, see his treatment upon earth, whose delight was to dwell with the sons of men.—His whole life though spotless and innocent, was a continued tract, a perpetual series, of sorrow and suffering: he never (for what we know) laughed in the world, nor did the world ever smile upon him, unless, with some deceitful shew of favour, to make ensuing indignities the more grievous and intolerable. Yea, from his birth to his death the world pursues him with deadly malice, and heaps up indignities upon him.——Void of all earthly pomp, or sublunary splendor, on his early appearance, the Son of God is entertained in a common inn, instead of a royal palace, a stable for his parlour, and a manger for his cradle—No sooner was his fame spread abroad, than a bloody decree is issued out against him—human infirmities and incident afflictions, such as, hunger and thirst, cold and fatigue, are his constant attendants—He is deprived of the privileges of the poor foxes, and silly birds, for these had their holes, and the birds their nests, but the Son of man had not whereupon to lay his head.—Hell and earth conspired against him, over whom he obtains not the victory, without a long and painful conflict: perfect innocence is mali-

liciously reproached, and truth itself can hardly escape outward violence.—At last the Lamb of God is betrayed, seized by a barbarous, wicked, and enraged mob, is insulted and scoffed by them, is treated as if he had been the most heinous of all malefactors. Hear O heavens ; give ear, O earth ; and be astonished at the amazing account ! the chief justice, the sovereign of heaven and earth, is arraigned before a man, to be his partial judge ! the advocate, O believers, the advocate, that pleads your cause, at the bar of God's justice, was accused and condemned, tho' no cause of death is found in him, but his innocence so manifest, that the judge openly declares it, before all his accusers ;—yet condemned he was, delivered up to the relentless fury of a mob—*Take ye him, and crucify him.*—*Pilate, Pilate*, the day is coming, when thou shalt receive from him a just doom—Thou washedst thy hands in water, before the multitude, saying, *I am innocent of the blood of this just person ;* but all the water in *Jordan* could not wash away thy guilt ; this only could that sacred blood do, which thou didst spill. Happy, happy *Pilate*, if acquitted at the bar of Christ in mercy, thou shalt join in singing with his crucifiers, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever, and ever, Amen.*—See, believers, how the blessed Jesus was once hurried from the bar to the prison, and again guarded to the place of execution—A place famous for the most surprising scene, that ever was or ever shall be transacted !—Listen, O my soul, listen and hear insulting raillery, on the way ; how is the sacred Monarch scornfully saluted, as if he had been a Pagan prince !—what a piercing noise now tingles in my ears, what hideous roars now strike every heart, that is not harder than the very adamant ! 'tis the voice of an ungrateful people, rushing on ruin, who fill the air with bitter

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exclamations, *Away with this man, crucify him, crucify him.*—Behold the king of glory stretched on the accursed tree, crucified between two thieves, as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three. O confounding sight! the Lamb of God hanging, bleeding, panting and dying on the accursed tree; while in the midst of all his torments, the most refreshing cordial afforded him, is a bitter potion of vinegar and gall!—This is his treatment from the children of men.—But whither are the angels now retired, how the celestial hierarchy employed, that they wait not upon their expiring Lord? Are ye gone, ye heavenly host, are ye ashamed, or afraid to behold your dying Lord? What! does silence prevail through all your glorious apartments, and sorrow appear in every lowring countenance? Yes, yes, heaven itself is now frowning upon him; † hear the heart-melting complaint of a bleeding Saviour, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* This was the language, O expectants of heaven——this was the language of your crucified Redeemer, when buying you, out of the hands of law and justice, at the expensive price of his own blood. Sin had plunged you so far in the score of divine vengeance, that none could save you but a God-man; and if he will save, he must also satisfy. See the amazing fruits of divine love! had God authorized his armies to destroy the whole human race, had he enlarged the angel's commission, who was sent with a flaming sword, to compass the tree of life, and given him further instructions, immediately to take vengeance on man, it had been but common

† Thou rather than thy justice should be stain'd,
Didst stain the cross; and work of wonders far
The greatest, that thy dearest far might bleed.

mon justice, and what our grand parent had ground to expect, as the first message from offended heaven. But the Son of God comes in person, not to sheath a destructive sword in the rebel's bowels, but to publish a covenant of peace, and to proclaim the glad tidings of a Redeemer. *He came not to condemn the world, as he justly might, but that the world thro' him might be saved.* O blessed surprisal ! O matchless, unutterable, inconceivable, divine love—the mighty fabrick of the universe, which the powerful arm of JEHOVAH reared up, has stood these six thousand years, a monument and remembrancer to beholders, of the great power, and skill, and bounty of the builder : but yonder on mount *Calvary*, is exhibited betwixt earth and heaven, a nobler and more lasting evidence of the love of God;—to draw down the prying and admiring eyes of angels from heaven above, and draw up the attention and glowing love of men, from beneath—of men, who are chiefly concerned to behold and admire. Come, O come and see, ye saints of God, ye redeemed from among men, and hail your Saviour.—Tune up your souls, for the harmonious concert, in singing some transporting anthem, concerning the Lamb that was slain.—He was born for you, he was crucified for you, he rose again, he ascended into heaven, and pleads at the Father's right hand, as an advocate and intercessor for you ; so that except he forget his own name JESUS EMMANUEL, except he forget his own nature, being flesh of our flesh ; except he forget his offices of king, priest and prophet ; yea except he forget himself, he cannot, he will not forget to discharge the Mediatorial office, of making continual intercession in your behalf. True, ye have a great law-suit to be pleaded, your affair is of the highest moment, and last importance ; ye have potent and subtile enemies

to oppose you; ay, but he who is your advocate will himself be your judge.

I begin now to think of shutting up this short address, with putting you in remembrance of the apostle's words, to the church of *Theſſalonica*, *Pray without ceasing*.—Let this be your daily exercise, and you will never, through eternity, have reason to repent of your compliance with the divine command. *Preces et lachrymae sunt arma ecclesiae*. The inspired penmen in prison, break not their chains, assault not their keepers, but fly to prayer as their only weapons:—nor, methinks, need I press this duty, from any other consideration, than this, that faithful and fervent prayer fails not, to obtain the victory, over heaven and earth, angels and men, over the whole inanimate as well as animate creation.—How *Jacob* prevails in his wrestling with God, sacred history instructs us; nor is God displeased that his saints strive, and use a holy violence with him; when they have his word for their warrant, 'tis a commendable strife to take no refusal; and he wisely and kindly allows it, because such importunity increases and discovers our value for the favours that are asked. The standing instance in the woman of *Canaan*, *Baritmaeus*, *Moses*, etc. are incontrollable evidences of this.—Angels are over-ruled in their procedure by means of prayer, and proceed not to destroy *Sodom* till *Lot* departs.—By prayer, *Elijah* raised up the widow's child from the dead.—And Christ tells us, some devils are only to be cast out, by prayer and fasting:—Prayer obtains victory over the inanimate creation above us—the watery element must also alter its course and change its nature, by *Moses* prayer.—Nor is the earth itself less obsequious. What greater encouragement would ye have, to set about the important exercise? Oh! careless ones, the day is coming, when the neglect of this duty will strike you to the quick, and the

remembrance of bygone warnings that you slighted, will rack you with dreadful, with inconceivable horror.

Consider it, O ye blooming youth, and let your early years be devoted to the service of your Maker; let not the sportive pastime of that inconsiderate period, divert you from offering unto God, the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart.—*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, that the dismal reflection on infantile years, may not create the melancholy anguish, of a mournful old age. Ye have souls, O young ones, immortal souls to care for, and whether these may be required at your hands, in your infancy, or at some more advanced period, ye know not. Have not many of your comrades that were stronger, healthier, and younger than you, been hurried from the embraces of a fond mother, to the solitary and silent grave? And who knows, but ye may fall the next sacrifice to the relentless rage of that frightful messenger, who will not stay to ask the number of your days, nor wait to enquire after the improvement of your privileges? O begin betimes, *to call on the name of the Lord*, tho' ye should, on that account, be exposed to the ridicule of your young companions. Ah how dismal the complaint! that frequently we are dunned with the detestable noise of oaths and imprecations, belched from the mouths of even babes and sucklings, that strangers amongst us, may be almost tempted to imagine, the earliest piece of our children's education consists in their being taught to lisp the language of hell.

And must I, (from your ill-educated children) enforce a charge against you, O perfidious parents? Is this the fruit of your discipline? Are these the evidences of regard to your rising offspring,—the effect of unwarrantable indulgence to your little ones?

ones? children are much apter to imitate practice than obey precept; and one hour may prove more remarkably successful, to engage them in the pursuit of folly, than many years may serve to reclaim them. — Parents have made over their children to the Lord, in baptism; ye have engaged to pray with them, and for them; the care of their souls, as well as bodies, is committed to you: and how loudly will their blood cry for vengeance, if they are lost, thro' your default! Oh let your daily practice and precept conspire, early to encourage and instruct them to sing praises to God and the Lamb.

Christians, in the prime of your years,—ye may be now ready, to boast of your strength, and promise yourselves many years of pleasure; ye have probably obtained more extensive views, in your acquaintance with the world, than others, who have been shut up in a recluse life, or confined to a bed of distress,—Have ye got a more intimate acquaintance, with the exercise of godliness, have ye obtained farther measures of the spirit of prayer, than your earlier years could boast off? Are ye really in earnest about religion, and serious in the concerns of eternity? If so, I may warrantably rank you among the happy number, who *give themselves always to prayer*. — But, do ye only trifle in the matter? In that case, be not offended, if I tell you, yea, take it as ye will, I assure you, from the authority of God's word, however splendid your appearance for religion may be, however well versed you are in all controversies, however singular for your peculiar strictness, however capable to handle any subject of litigation, however careful to attend sermons, or read books, however anxious to retain your religious name; every of these particulars will serve only to heighten your condemnation, and appear as so many evidences against you. — *Do not*

err, my beloved brethren; the name and substance, the shew and reality of religion, are quite different things.

H heads of families, governours of societies,——Ye have the charge of others, as well as of your own souls; and the most effectual mean, for preventing the ruin of yourselves, or families, is, often to *call upon the name of the Lord*. The world is ready to admire the sudden, and surprising revolutions, that often occur in families, and societies; how remarkably their substance is blasted; with what expedition their riches (so long a gathering) wing their flight in the most rapid and volatile manner: but may it not much more engage the attention, and enhance the admiration of the sober-thinking world, that vengeance is not more frequently, in this remarkable way, executed upon such, as seem to scorn the pursuit of these celestial treasures, *which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal*.——Let not a cumberance about many things, exile a due concern about the *one thing needful*——Let not your family duties shuffle out the devotion of your closets, nor must your private exercises apologize, for the neglect of calling your families together: If the one or the other is omitted, ye do it at your peril; God and your own consciences, will ere long reckon about the matter.

Ye ambassadors of the prince of peace, who are commissioned to set the trumpet to your mouths, and alarm the secure world, lest they perish in their iniquity.——Who are authorised to *proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and comfort all that mourn*——let fervent prayer, and faithful preaching go hand in hand. Do not each of us, among the several people of our concern, see the melancholy fruits, of the neglect of prayer and faithfulness? What distractions and animosities, what divisions and subdivisions are professors crumbled into! Yea,

I was almost going to alledge, that this may be much owing to the factious, and turbulent spirits of such watchmen, who give themselves more to pay homage to their own humour, than to pray without ceasing, in behalf of the broken and bleeding, shattered and scattered flock of Christ——Our work is not to tear asunder, but gather together; not to pull down, but build up the mystical body of our Glorious Redeemer. It is not our business to draw men to a party, but to bring them to Christ; to make them his disciples, not ours. Oh let us ever remember the importance of our great charge. The care of immortal souls is committed to us, *we watch as those that must give account.*——Ah what ghastly looks, what a pale visage, what a black and dismal countenance, will the indolent watchman discover, at the solemn day, when we, and all our auditories again meet, in the great congregation! how shocking then to hear the hideous yells, the piercing cries of ruined souls, thronging together, and throwing all their curses upon slothful shepherds, pointing out their guides, as the instruments of their ruin! But lo, what a glorious morning will now dawn, to the faithful, unwearied watchman, who has been stretching out his arms all the day long, treating with sinners in Christ's name, pouring out his soul, *incessantly*, for a blessing upon his industrious labours, and can now appeal, before the tribunal of his great Master, how gladly he would spend and have been spent, in bringing souls to Christ! Get up, ye heralds of heaven, and give the world to understand, ye are not trilling in the Lord's matters, nor proclaiming to others, what ye believe not yourselves.——Let the whole of your conduct be walking-sermons, that the word preached may prove, like *Aaron's rod*, comely in your hands—Let the area of your closets attest the frequency and sincerity of
your

your prayers.—Let fields, orchards, and gardens witness the spirituality of our walking meditations: and every secret corner offer itself, as a fit opportunity for wrestling, with bended knees, before the throne of God—While families around us are lulled in easy sleep, while fowls and cattle betake themselves to rest; let us every now and then, improve the favourable season, to continue our secret intercourse with heaven; that so, in the end, we may be able to say with the apostle, *We are pure from the blood of all men.*

In fine, Let all orders and ranks drown the invective language of jars and discord, in the melodious musick of praises and prayer — Let not an high opinion of ourselves create harsh thoughts of others, who may be maintaining the same essentials of christianity, though they jump not in every punctilio with us, but let us study to adorn the christian character, in making our light so *to shine before men, that others may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.* ——— Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. Lam. iii. 41.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS nothing seems more destructive to the exercise of prayer, and other christian duties, than pride, passion, prejudice, etc. arising frequently among professors, from differences in judgment, about points of religion, either less momentuous, or less clear and intelligible to meaner capacities; and after revolving the records of past ages, after surveying the flaming appearances for truth, in earlier or latter periods, 'tis considerably difficult to fix on

a time, when religious sects abounded, in greater plenty and variety, than at the immediate juncture: it cannot, I presume, offend, if I take the freedom, further to drop a few sentences from my pen, *especially* to such readers as may be more disposed to promote the spirit of a particular party, than the spirit of prayer,——Cast your eyes around you, my dear brethren, and see the melancholy effects of humour and bigotry, in the matters of religion,——There is certainly one dismal prognostick of ruin, too glaringly conspicuous, not to be observed prevailing among many individuals of the several distinguished parties, in these dregs of time; *viz.* a spirit of discord and division, strife and contention, (I had almost said *spite* and *animosity*,) every where abounding. The fatal malady becomes so universal, that congregations echo such a *Pulpit* dialect: and alas! what a mournful prospect of future scenes must the lamentable tidings hint, and forewarn us of! nor is there any thing less controverted, than that heats, divisions, and distractions among professors, are generally owing to the turn and humour of churchmen,——But without reflecting where perhaps there may be too just grounds.——

You'll say; 'Tis the duty of ministers and people, each in their respective stations, to be free and faithful, open and publick, in testifying against errors and all abominations prevailing.' True, 'tis beyond all peradventure, the indispensable duty of those set on the walls of Zion, to sound a faithful alarm, without regarding the attempts of sycophancy, or being overawed by the threats of *even* monarchical grandeur; nor is it less incumbent on the followers of the Prince of peace, *earnestly to contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.* But, *would to God* our contendings one with another, were in a way consistent with the meekness and
mo-

moderation of the christian character ; in such a way, as might have a tendency to instruct, not to irritate ; to discover a spirit of humility, not of ostentation ; a hatred at the sin, and a love to the soul of a misinformed brother ; that, while endeavouring to correct but not to corrupt the mind, we might maintain a due concern for the glory of God, and at the same time, a just abhorrence and dislike to party interest ! Where such a noble principle is implanted, prayer and wrestling with the Lord, cannot fail to precede and pursue resolutions truly evangelick. Whereas, a habit of raillery, a practice of calumny so remarkably prevailing, at present, among *almost* persons of every order and rank, is so hurtful and pernicious to the peace of Zion and success of the gospel, that the most destructive weapons of war cannot make greater havock upon contending armies, than this is ready to do among divided societies, — In a martial field, three bullets may be frequently discharged, ere any slaughter ensue, but the tongue of a calumniator effectually kills three persons at one blow, *viz.* the object of his resentment, himself, and the person he imposes upon.

Moreover, a compleat unity and uninterrupted harmony among all the expectants of heaven, in every point of sentiment, is now to be pursued, but hereafter to be obtained; when all the little differences, which embroil the minds of mortals, shall be eternally removed. And alas, *christians*, how easy a prey must the protestant interest, in *Britain* and *Ireland*, become to the open enemies of christianity, while there is so much devouring and destroying one another, in these isles, — Isles once famous for their steady adherence to Christ, while mutual confidence and affection subsisted among all the members of his mystical body, in such a measure, that the
most

most inveterate rage and bloody barbarity of *popery* itself could never totally extinguish.

But, ah, now is the dreadful prediction, *Is. ix, 20.* verified in its full accomplishment upon us, when one man acts like a ravenous wolf against his neighbour, embracing every opportunity to tear, defame and destroy. Were persons who are possessed of such a turn of mind, equally careful and conscientious, in examining matters at home, they might *probably* find less leisure for so repeated excursions abroad : and, I'm verily perswaded, if a spirit truly *catholick* and *apostolick* prevailed, among the godly of all *presbyterian* congregations, in our land, it could not be deemed presumptuous to hope, that broils and intestine litigations might happily be exiled, under the smiles of heaven, by an introduction of the more evangelick embellishments of every christian correspondence. But oh, how is patience, love, tenderness, sympathy and forbearance one with another, *even* in matters of meer indifference, branded by the blind zeal, by the vehement fury of bigotted factions,——branded with the odious character of lax and dangerous opinions ! such are the narrow views, such the restricted notions, so keen the unruly and turbulent passions of the more ignorant zealots among all parties, at this lamentable juncture ; that 'tis quite fashionable with many, instantly to anathematize such as support not every link of that chain, wherewith they have begirt themselves.——Hence, communion is refused with each of the saints, who will venture to speak favourably of such as are not altogether of a piece, in every point of sentiment with themselves, tho' in other respects unexceptionable ; as if the church *catholick* consisted only of them ; as if they alone were the true *Israel* of God, to whom only belonged the promises, and hopes of salvation ; and, as if all others who differed from them

them in any point of controversy were utterly rejected of God, and were sure of damnation †.

Whither, ah, whither is that *charity* gone, that *suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil*? What is become of that distinguishing badge and characteristic, by which all men may know Christ's disciples, even by this, *That they love one another*? Would we retrieve these adorning graces, would we recover these shining ornaments, let us (despising the mean calumnies, and contemptibly low aspersions of party humour and prophane wit) let us bestir ourselves to a more noble exercise, and labour that our united cries may be heard before the throne of God. — Away with secret grudges one towards another, and *let your moderation be known unto all men*. — Ah my dear brethren, you'll think me too severe, if I tell you, 'There seems to be more love abounding among the declared adversaries of the gospel, whether *Papish* or *Pagan*, than among some professed christians themselves. It was once said of christians (as a heathen author tells us) 'Behold how they love one another.' But if the same heathen were now to rise from his grave, and travel thro' christendom, and see the lives of the Christians now a-days, would he not blot out what he had once writ, and record to future ages; 'Behold how the christians hate one another.' For alas! does not mournful experience shew us, that christian love, among people of every denomination, is far decayed, almost wholly ex-

† Let not this weak unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe:
If I am right, oh teach my heart
Still in the right to stay:
If I am wrong, thy grace impart
To find that better way.

tinguished ! How applicable the apostolick alarm at such a time ! But *if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* Study more and more to know yourselves, and you'll readily find fewer spare hours for censuring others.

In pursuing a *national* reformation, first set about the attainment of a real reformation in your own hearts and families, by exciting each other to a holy strife, for obtaining the spirit of prayer, which seems in a great measure, to have abandoned our coasts, and if obtained, might prove one of the most effectual medicines, for healing the widening breaches of our land, that tottereth under a tremendous load of aggravated guilt.

O my God, how earnestly do I long to see a time when prince and people, masters and servants, parents and children, teachers and scholars, shall all fall down and worship thee, in the beauty of holiness ; when the whole earth shall be filled with thy glory !
 — Come and worship the Lord, ye kindreds of the people ; fear before him, all the earth ; know ye, that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves. He it is, who holds our souls in life ; — who gives us life, and breath, and all things. — At the name of God, let every knee bow, and every tongue confess his glory ; whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth ; and may the glory and praise of JEHOVAH fill the wide world, as the waters fill the channel of the spacious sea.
Amen and Amen.

B I G O T R Y DISCLAIMED

AND

UNITY RECOMMENDED,

Among all the members of Christ's mystical body.

B E I N G

The Substance of a Sermon Preached at
Glasgow, on the 6th of Jan. 1754.

*Psalms cxxii. 3. Jerusalem is builded as a city, that
is compact together.*

AS Solomon's temple was the glory of *Jerusalem*,
and *Jerusalem* the beauty of the whole earth,
so both these were lively types and figures of the
church. The temple was framed in *Lebanon*, and
set up in *Zion*; neither ax nor hammer was heard
in that holy structure. There was indeed at *Le-
banon* nothing but noise and tumult in cutting down
the cedars, but at rearing up the temple in *Sion*, no-
thing but peace and silence. The foundation be-
ing laid, the walls of that glorious fabrick did rise,
which all nations admired, and future ages celebrated
and

and the matter of this goodly frame strives with the proportion, which shall most excell: each inviting the attention, and dazling the fixed eye of every astonished spectator. *Nehemiah*, in building the walls of *Jerusalem*, divided the task between the trowil and the sword, so disposing of every *Israelite*, that while the one hand was a mason to build, the other was a soldier to defend. A lively figure of the church militant, wherein every one labours weaponed; where there must neither be an idle soldier, nor a secure workman; but each must so build, as that he is ready to ward off the attack of an enemy; must so wield the sword of the spirit for defence, that withal he build up himself in the most holy faith. And as in erecting the earthly, so in rearing up the mystical temple, there must be no fruitless valour, no unsafe diligence, no disorderly work, no jarring discord: *For Jerusalem is builded as a city, that is compact together.*

Having in the forenoon, finished what was proposed from the subject prosecuted last Lord's day, viz. *What unspeakable encouragement attends the journeying christian, on his road to the heavenly Canaan*; I shall endeavour to employ this evening in offering a few thoughts for your edification, from these words, where we have, (1.) A metaphorical description of the church, by that of *Jerusalem*. (2.) The manner of the building in this city, *it is compact together.*

Doct. *The structure of the earthly Jerusalem was a beautiful emblem and type of the spiritual and mystical Jerusalem, or church militant.*

For confirming and illustrating this doctrine, I shall, under divine assistance, pursue the following method.

1. Give a short account of this city *Jerusalem*.

II.

II. Discover in what respect it is a type of the catholic church.

III. Consider the kind or form of structure therein.

IV. Conclude with some improvement and application.

I. By *Jerusalem* in sacred writ is sometimes to be understood, that city earthly or topical ; sometimes spiritual or mystical ; sometimes heavenly or celestial. A description of the situation of this earthly city is what we now undertake. — *Jerusalem* was compassed about with hills and valleys ; the hills were *Gareb*, *Calvary*, *Gihon*, *Aceldama*, and mount *Olivet* ; the valleys were, that of *dead carcases*, *Tyropicon*, *Jehosaphat* or *Hinnon*, &c. The city itself stood upon sundry hills, as *Sion*, *Akra*, *Moriah*, &c. and upon each of these mountains were some things remarkable to be observed. Upon mount *Gareb* the lepers were put ; upon mount *Calvary* Christ was crucified, the king of glory was slaughtered ; upon mount *Gihon* *Solomon* was anointed king ; in *Aceldama* was the potters field, which was purchased with the price of the Son of God's blood for burying strangers in ; upon mount *Olivet* was Christ's transfiguration ; upon mount *Sion* stood the fort of the *Jebusites*, which king *David* taking called the city of *David* ; upon *Akra* (from the Hebrew *Hakkara*, *obviam veniens*, because there *Melchisedeck* met *Abraham*, and blessed him, on his return from the slaughter of the kings) stood the old city *Salem*, where *Melchisedick* dwelt. Upon mount *Moriah*, *Abraham* would have offered his son *Isaac*, and here the angel of the Lord stood with a drawn sword in his hand, above the threshing floor of *Araunah* the *Jebusite* ; also upon this mountain was *Solomon's* temple built.

Jerusalem is often called *Sion*, and *Sion* is called the

the hill of God, that is, an excellent hill; for the *Hebrews* wanting a superlative, supply it by adding the name of God, whereby they understand that which is best of its kind: And when *Jerusalem* and *Sion* are put together, they imply a most expressive repetition of one and the same thing, thus, *O daughter of Sion, O daughter of Jerusalem*. But can there be any beauty or safety in such a city as this, reared up upon and invironed with mountains, *feriunt summos fulmina montes*, the highest mountains are exposed to the greatest violence? yes, but this is not as *Sinai* flaming with fire, no mountain of danger or terror; 'tis not solitary and unfrequented like that to which the devil took our Saviour, where one may see glory and not enjoy it; 'tis not like mount *Nebo* and *Pisgab*, whence Moses might only behold the land of promise at a distance: But *Jerusalem* stand a city populous and full of buildings, like that Christ speaks of, *in my fathers house are many mansions*, and which an apostle calls *the city of the living God*, not by adscription, but by foundation and everlasting possession. Here then is a city, a city on a mountain, a city compactly built together, a city eminent for its situation, glorious for its building, and its name is *Jerusalem. i. e.* a city of peace, and that which *Plato* had over his door may fitly be applied here *nemo nisi veritates et pacis studiosus, intrabit*. Let none enter within this city but such as love to cultivate truth and peace, for an apostle is bold to say, *I would they were even cut off that trouble you*.

II. I proposed to discover in what respect this city is a type of the catholick church, which may appear from the following particulars.

I. It is so in election, *For the Lord hath chosen Zion*, out of all cities, and his church out of all nations: *ye are a chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar*

culiar people, enclosed from the commons of the world, and God's own appropriation: the earthly *Jerusalem* was walled around with stone, this is hedged, as it were, with grace. God hath planted a vineyard in a fruitful hill, and he fenced it.

2. In grandeur and dignity; the church, as *Jerusalem*, is beautiful for situation, the palace of the great king, the sanctuary of his worship, his presence-chamber; there was the seat of David, here is the throne of *David's Lord*. True, it may not be said of the church as is said of Jerusalem, *fuit sed non est*, the Divine prediction being fulfilled against it, *that not so much as one stone should be left upon another*. Had the fences of this city been stronger than the walls of Babylon, yet sin within was able enough to ruin the bulwarks without; but the spiritual Jerusalem stands not on earthly foundations; 'tis built upon *Christ*, that rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. *Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious.* 1 Pet. ii. 6.

3. Jerusalem is a type of the church in *safety*; cities are commonly reputed places of the greatest security; so Lot said of the city Zoar, *O let me escape thither and my soul shall live*. This was a motive to the old world to build a city, *lest*, say they, *we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*. Gen. xi. 4. The Israelites had their cities of refuge, and a law for their protection; ay, but the place of true safety is within the city of God; all without the ark perished in the deluge, but the Lord adds daily to the church such as shall be saved.

4. In the paucity of its inhabitants compared with the rest of the world; a city is populous in respect of a small village, but thin and few are its inhabitants in respect of the nations. How few are the true citizens of Jerusalem compared with the rest of mankind! *many are called but few are chosen*. Christ's

flock is but a little one : God's reservation is but a small remnant, *even a tenth*. They are compared to the gleaning of grapes after the vintage is over. God's collection is but small, *I will take you one of a city, and two of a family*. When all flesh had corrupted their ways, only Noah and his house escaped. There was none righteous in Sodom but Lot. When four hundred and fifty prophets stand up for Baal, there was but one for the Lord. Four hundred flatterers are ready for the king of Israel, when there is but one Micaiah to tell the truth. The Lord's prophet complains, *that he and the children given him were for signs and wonders in Israel*; When Pilate enquired of the Jews, what should be done with Jesus, every one cried *crucify him, &c.* There was a general shout for *Diana*; small and great receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads; the children of Israel are like a little flock of kids, but the wicked like the Syrians fill the country.

5. This city is a figure of the visible church in government; the King of glory is the only Head of Zion. And as *Alexander* said to *Darius*, *Coelum non admittit duos Soles*; So Christ will admit no rival or partner to share with him, in his royal dignity. *Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone, in whom all the building is fitly framed together*; he not only by his authority governs it; but by his grace and spirit enliveneth the inhabitants of it; so that *we live not, but Christ liveth in us*.—— In this city the elect are Christ's younger brethren, ministers are his watchmen, faith and holiness are his laws, the godly are his loyal subjects, heaven is his throne, and eternal life is the recompence of the citizens.

6. In not being at all times alike conspicuous; many hills surrounding *Jerusalem* intercepted its view at a distance, and mists frequently occasioned an obscure prospect of this city; so the church is not always alike gloriously conspicuous, in the eyes of the

the world. In the days of *Elijah*, clouds of defection hovered so thick, that the notable prophet could not discern, that God even then had seven thousand worshippers. Truth is like a wedge of pure gold, yet impostors may, with their mixtures and sophistications, augment it to an huge unweildy heap; and tho' it still retain the tincture of gold, may notwithstanding be mingled with corrupt traditions, superstition &c. Yet he who hath a fan in his hand, is able to make it appear splendid in shew and substance; and he has given the touchstone of his word for extracting it from the dross — And indeed, this city sometimes flourisheth; and appears fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners; tho' in the church visible there is still a mixt company; here are true believers and counterfeit professors, corn and chaff, tares and wheat, the vine and the bramble, the lillie and the briar, the sheep and the goats; some who have a pure heart, a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned; and others who have a colour of religion, but in heart deny the power of godliness.

III. I proceed to consider the kind or form of structure in *Jerusalem*; it is compactly built together, as if the whole was but one fabrick; true, tho' this mystical city is but one, it hath two parts, viz; one triumphant over the devil, the world, and the flesh, *singing praises to the Lamb, and to Him that sitteth on the throne*; the other militant, yet groaning under imperfection, striving by grace to beat down corruption, and struggling with many tribulations on way to the heavenly city. — Again, this church militant hath many parts, though but one body; as the ocean is but one, yet distinguished and denominated by the regions upon which it lies; as there is one sun, many beams; one kingdom, many counties; one tree, many branches; so there

are many particular churches, but one true catholic and universal church — universal, in respect of time, having a being in all ages since the promise made to our grand parents—universal, in respect of persons, containing some of all sorts and degrees of men, princes and subjects, rich and poor, bond and free, etc.—universal, in respect of place, being gathered out of all nations, and from different parts of the earth. Thus the compact building of *Jerusalem* represents that unity and concord which ought to subsist in the church, and may consist in the three following particulars,

1. An unity of faith : true faith, wherever it is, rests upon Christ, and every believer must see with his own eyes, apprehend with his own hand, have oil in his own lamp, and labour himself in the Lord's vineyard — However widely believers may differ in other respects, yet such as meet now in the unity of saving faith, shall all one day join in the participation of these unspeakable joys, which we have waited for *as the end of our faith*, even the salvation of our souls. Let the worldling possess his wishes, *Epicurus* his pleasures, *Alexander* his honour, *Midas* his gold ; but may our constant desire and earnest endeavour be, that God would compactly cement together the citizens of *Jerusalem*, in the unity of faith.

2. An unity of knowledge, *viz.* the knowledge spoken of by our Saviour, *This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* The knowledge we now have of either, is but faint and imperfect in the very best ; frequently obscured by the power of indwelling corruption ; and sometimes mixed with a great deal of uncertainty, and a wavering kind of unbelief. We are now pilgrims, and know no more of our celestial country than we can view by the telescope of faith,

faith, in the glass of divine revelation ; but these dark discoveries will at length be turned into perfect views in that upper city, where we and all the believing choir shall drink of eternal bliss in the fountain, shall partake of joys in themselves unspeakable, in shew beautiful, in weight excessive, in dignity incomparable, and in continuance everlasting ; where we may say with Sheba's queen, *Is was a true report that I heard—and behold the half was not told me.*

3. An unity of doctrine, in preaching and practising according to the truths of the same everlasting gospel, without adulterating the purity thereof by false glosses, human inventions, or corrupt traditions ; such an happy unity would make ministers and people to hold fast the faithful word, as it is taught us from the oracle of inspiration, and thereby should we be able, *by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayer.* May God send such an happy unity to his church, for Christ's sake !

IV. I come now to make some improvement of the doctrine, and would here beg you may beware of mistaking me, by grasping at broken sentences, without having the connexion along. From what has been said we may then infer.

I. INFER. That it is the duty of every one to join himself into christian society, and to keep communion with the citizens of *Jerusalem*. I know some are so nice (not to use a harsher term) on this point, that they quarrel at some individuals, and cannot keep communion with any society, among whom exceptionable persons may be found : but had I such before me, I would enquire of them, what security against this can they have in the most refined and best constitute churches ? What church so pure but hath some defaults, some persons culpable among them ? Nay, at this rate the most private synagogues must be dashed in pieces, for these are not without

their wrongs : and men must turn seekers they know not what nor *where*, must become hermits and *Anchorites*, must retire to cells and give up all intercourse with Christians, any where upon earth ; or else extend their wings above the universe, and pitch beyond ubiquity itself. Oh, what tears of blood are sufficient to bewail the low esteem, many at this day have of the privileges within *Jerusalem* ! some are so much engaged in the devil's service, that the publick ordinances of religion are the object of their ridicule ; but is it not still more shocking, that many professors, and perhaps these of the strictest kind, should be so easily influenced, thro' careflessness or prejudice, to lull away sabbaths at home, when opportunitys offer for meeting in the Lord's courts, and hearing the good word of God ! Such will be ready to vindicate themselves by telling us, *This man has too much charity, the other does not lash bitterly enough against such a sect, a third differs from them in some particular sentiment, &c. And therefore they have not freedom to hear* *.

O miserable pretences ! will such trifling excuses be sustained, in the great day of accounts, for slighting gospel-ordinances ? If men will hear no minister, because every minister and Christian of a congregation has not the same views of things with them, they must in process of time fall out *even* with themselves ; for I presume, no man, in a state of im-

* One would think, that in a day when there are so many different societies, professing to adhere to the presbyterian interest ; such as call themselves *presbyterians* could have no tolerable excuse for assembling in no congregation whatsoever, for divine service ; and yet, 'tis alas, a certain truth, that there are some such in this land, who, under pretence of their own greater strictness and sanctity than that of others, own not, nor countenance any minister, or any gospel ministrations dispensed among any congregation or society, of whatever denomination.

imperfection, but is conscious of his own fallibility; and if such persons will have these altogether blameless and perfect, they must go to heaven for them, and not expect to meet with any perfection on the coasts of mortality.—How highly did the Psalmist esteem that privilege, which many refuse to themselves, and look upon with a contemptible eye in this age! and what tremendous roars, what dreadful cries are now among the damned, for slighting gospel ordinances! what would not they give, when 'tis too late, to hear one message of mercy proclaimed from these very ministers, they once rejected and despised? O take care, my dear brethren, that prejudice against us, do not cool your hearts at our Lord and master, nor make you lightly esteem the tidings we bring you: if some will revile and reproach, let them open their mouths against us, but not against precious Christ and his gospel; And, who of our Lord's servants would not gladly submit to have his name tore asunder in every company, and willingly lay down his head to be trampled upon by the vilest of men; yea, who would not welcome trials, tribulations, and sufferings of every kind, for bringing souls home to our master's service? *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*

2. INFER. That Christians in different societies ought to exercise the greatest degree of love, tenderness and charity towards one another, when there is a concord among the whole in maintaining the fundamentals of Christianity. How little of this prevails with many at present, mournful experience may tell us. Woe's me, that such heats and distractions should take place among divided parties, as to obstruct the communion of saints, and make one believer look upon another as a heathen man and a publican! There is indeed a maxim prevailing with many (which for ten thousand worlds I durst

never subscribe) *viz.* 'That after a person accedes to one society of Christians, whom he apprehends to be walking nighest to the purity of divine institution; his joining in any part of divine worship with others that are not embodied with his sect, &c. is sinful, and inconsistent with the nature of society. * Hence, the language of bigotry accuses him of laxness and what not. But that such a dialect discovers a spirit too eager in pursuit of party interest, and favours too much of a Papal *imaginary* infallibility, must be obvious to every unprejudiced person. True, when sinful terms of communion are imposed on the conscience, upon the approbation of which, one's admission into any congregation depends, the door is too closely shut to afford access; but while that is not the case, and a mutual concordance subsists in all the essentials of religion, every little difference in sentiment cannot warrant believer's keeping at such a distance, one from another.

3. IN-

* Let not the reader conclude, that I enjoin an association with such as gainsay any of the fundamentals of our holy religion; nor a communion with any society in things sinful, and contradictory to the divine law. No, there is a vast difference, betwixt either of these, and the many humorous debates which oftentimes arise about things merely circumstantial; *that is*, things which may be either disputed, dropped, or contradicted, without condemning any gospel truth. — 'Tis true, party heats and animosities among professors, may at first be well design'd: only they are misplaced, by unwarily raising in their minds, the circumstantials of religion, in the place of the *essentials* of it; and having once done this, how dismal are the ordinary effects among the real followers of the *Lamb*, until this mistake, which first gives rise to their animosities, is corrected. — However astonishing it must appear to every sober and serious mind, yet 'tis a certain truth, that amongst the dividing partys of presbyterians in Scotland at this day, there are some to be found, who, because they cannot join in all things with those they were once in the closest connection with, they will now therefore join in no part of Christian communion; not so much as in family worship with them. Ah tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon.

3. INFER. How culpable are they who stir up strife and contention, among the inhabitants of this compact city Jerusalem ! it is no way consistent even with the wisdom of nature, to rear up an excellent fabrick, with exquisite skill in all its contexture of parts, which, after formation and erection, should immediately fall into dissolution : nor are bodies framed with a fit subordination of members, constitute for the use of the whole, without joints, sinews, nerves and ligatures to knit themall together : even so, it is not the institution of heaven, that the mystical body of Christ should be rent and tore a-funder : but, diseases have no greater tendency to ruin mortal bodies, nor fire to consume buildings, than discord and animosities, among the citizens, have to demolish the walls of *Jerusalem*.—By these our spirits are dissipated, our strength is lost, and we become a prey to the enemy without ; whose musick is our sorrow, whose glory is our shame.

4. INFER. How fruitless will the attempts of such be, as seek, by somenting divisions, to raze the walls of *Jerusalem* ; these men may indeed harrafs the inhabitants (if the Lord permit them) but even this will turn out to the glory of the building. What tho' all nations of the world should attempt to hinder the rising of the sun ? They would but act like those Pigmies that are storried to have gone in armour, to repress the ebbing and flowing of the sea. Even so, all that men or devils can do against this city, are but ludicrous acts, and discover their folly, as much as if they attempted to beat back the wind by throwing a stone, or to drain up the clouds by a water pump. I shall now conclude with a few exhortations.

I. *Exhor.* Ye that are without, hasten, O hasten to get within the walls of this mystical city. Ye are, I know, all inhabitants by profession ; ye have been admitted members of the visible church, and have
per-

perhaps obtained all the privileges we can give you ; but alas, if this is the whole ye can lay claim to, ye are not yet true citizens, nor real members of Christ's mystical body. The king himself is a coming to enquire ; who of you have entertained him in your hearts, and who only in their heads have received him ; and if ye are found mere nominal professors, you'll have but a sorry reckoning. Hypocrites may easily impose upon us, but our Lord will not be mocked, and cannot be deceived. O inhabitants of *Glasgow*, what a fearful account must ye make to him ! Ye have at different periods had many eminent wrestling ministers, labouring among you in the work of the gospel ; and according to the greatness of your singular privileges, so proportionably great will your condemnation be, in case of deceiving others and deluding your own souls. It will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* in the day of judgment, than for these of *Britain* and *Ireland*, who have only the shew, but want the substance of religion. Oh nominal professors, fly for your lives to the blood of a Redeemer ; get within the walls of this compact city, or if ye do not, ye will be ruined for ever.

2 *Exhor.* Ye that are really citizens of the spiritual Jerusalem, beware of breaking the peace and marring the harmony, that so much beautifys and strengthens this city, *How pleasant a thing is it for brethren to dwell together in unity !* If division of tongues obstructed the building of an earthly Babel, why need we be surprized, if distractions of head and heart hinder the building of a spiritual temple ? If the children of the same mother (like *Rebecca's* twins) begin to struggle within her womb, it cannot be without much grief and pain. *More particularly,* 1. See to get your hearts love and affection firmly set upon Christ, and thereby you'll be

beget an unfeigned love and regard to all his members, amidst whatever society you find them—Christ's friends will be your friends, and Christ's enemys your enemys. 2. Study, by grace, to have sin vanquished, and corruption subdued within you. Your lusts and idols are great adversaries to the advancement of this spiritual fabrick; therefore mortify these, that peace may dwell within our Jerusalem. 3. Labour to cultivate peace and harmony among all the true inhabitants of Jerusalem, in whatever corner thereof they may dwell: and extinguish pride, which is one of the greatest causes of Bigotry.

I hope none of you will take it amiss to have this duty pressed upon you, at a time when division and contentions are arrived at such a pitch. O bear with me a little, *believers*, and if ye should not, yet I am charged to deal faithfully with your souls, as one that must soon appear with every of you, before the tremendous tribunal of my great master. Let me then, dear Christians, let me exhort and intreat you, to abandon that narrow, contracted and uncharitable spirit of bigotry and self-conceit, which seems to be one of the greatest banes to the exercise of godliness at this day—Are ye not conscious, my brethren, that in the several protestant reformed churches of Christendom (and particularly in this national church) there are many godly, great, and worthy men—men truly eminent for Christian piety, and ministerial faithfulness, * having also souls under their care, who have got acquaintance, not with the

* The judicious reader will be surprised to know, that my speaking so favourably and charitably concerning ministers in the different protestant reformed churches, was the only particular cavilled at in this sermon, by such as would confine the spirit of the gospel to their own particular sect.—I have all along evited unnecessary reflections, and intend not here to introduce any.—I shall only stay to make one

the shew only, but with the life and reality of religion? are they not jointly maintaining the same essentials of Christianity which you espouse? why then should matters of a smaller concern so inflame your spirits one against another, and create such wide distances betwixt you? Beware then of passing harsh constructions, or of entertaining groundless prejudices against such as have fellowship with Christ, and carry on a daily intercourse with heaven. No, *let us rather as fellow-christians, love one another, and bear one anothers burthens, and so fulfill the law of Christ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace:* Being assured, that altho' every capacity is not now of an equal dimension, nor can the same thing be apprehended by every man in the same light, yet all the children of the kingdom will at length see eye to eye, will have jarrs and discords eternally exiled from amongst them, when *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* But while I declare myself a friend to all of every

so-
 observation, for removing the prejudices of such as have expressed their aversion at the word *Faithfulness* being applied here; and that is — All I ever understood by *faithfulness*, when applied to ministers or others, was nothing more than their endeavouring, by grace, to act honestly and conscientiously, according to their *light*, and that measure of knowledge and other gifts or graces, bestowed on them by him, who giveth to every one as his infinite wisdom sees meet: and thus, comparatively it may be applied to the weak, as well as the strong in faith or knowledge; but *faithfulness*, absolutely considered, can be applied to none but that great shepherd and minister of the New Testament JESUS CHRIST, who was *faithful as a son over his own house*. There are different degrees of attainments, unto which both ministers and private Christians arrive, and I could heartily wish, that such as make more adoe about words than things, would remember, that the Lord has no where appointed one man's light or measure of knowledge, to be set up as the infallible standard or unblemished pattern for others to walk by; nor has he given to all his own children the same measure of gifts or graces, (altho' every believer has true and saving grace) Wherefore let not any man *think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but let him think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* — See 1 Cor. 12. Chap: *throughout.*

society that belongs to Christ, and adverse to the stirring up of faction, or the supporting of party interest; There's one objection may possibly be started in some of your breasts.

OBJ. *At this rate, persons can never be fixed in any principle, but may be constantly wandring from one society to another.*

ANS. Such an inference cannot fairly be drawn from the premises; let the *objector* beware lest he is aspiring more after the name of a profession, than after being established in the faith, and alledging that while he fosters his own humour, he is supporting a zeal for truth. Ah poor man, it will serve little purpose to thy immortal soul, what community ye belong to by profession, if ye get not a saving acquaintance with the power of free grace on thine own heart. And would men desist from pursuing their own interest, and gratifying their own peculiar turn of mind, I could venture to compendize all our different parties and factions into two, saints and sinners. But to remove this objection from having any force against what has been now delivered; I would still carefully distinguish betwixt differences in circumstances only, and differences in the fundamentals of Christianity. That the first is the case with sundry sects at this day, is too obvious to need probation; but when the fundamentals of Christianity are overthrown, then the people of God are enjoined to separate, and can no longer keep communion without sin. *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues †.* But when differences re-
spect

† As it must be obvious to every discerning eye, that an earnest contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, has no necessary connexion with a spirit of bigotry; so, I can hardly be persuaded to believe

spect only circumstantial points, 'tis a pity to see men so anxiously prone to draw persons to parties, and to pursue the support each of their own factions, while the gospel is thereby, with many, turned into contempt, and seems daily to languish as divisions encrease. Why, oh why, my dear fellow-christians, are your swords drawn one against another, as if ye had heathens or Mahumetans on the field of combat? Will ever bitterness of spirit, or satyr of language procure peace within the walls of Jerusalem? Why are ye sobent, at all times, to lay open every particular of difference between you, but careless to converse on the subjects ye are all agreed about? What encouragement would such a practice give to the poor Indians to embrace Christianity, if they were amongst us? O believers, strife and contentions with one another are not weapons fit for propogating your Lord's cause. *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Ye are all traveling to the same heavenly inheritance, your journey is but short, and why should matters of lesser moment cast you out by the way? Remember, while ye are on your road, ye cannot all expect to have the same extensive views in every punctilio, tho' a state of perfection is awaiting you, after the toil and fatigue of your journey is over.

But that I may not encroach too much upon your patience, only allow me again to intreat persons of all

Heve that the most confined bigot, will venture expressly to say (altho' his common way of reasoning implys little less) *that there are no pious and devout christians to be found, except among the men of his own party.* If this then is granted, let him bear testimony and contend against the evils and defections of such societies, as he stands separate from; but withal, let him do them common justice in his carriage towards them, and his conversation about them; and let him love that image of Christ which he sees in them; and thus beware of engrossing the whole of christianity into the distinguishing peculiarities of his own particular party.

all orders and ranks, to take more heed unto themselves, and beware of passing rash judgments upon others; let the dreadful havock that humourous contentions have already made on the church, excite you to pursue such a spirit as becomes Christians. Did you seek to raze Jerusalem, and grieve your common mother; did ye desire the languishing of the gospel, the extirpation of real religion, the loss of posterity, the advantage of an adversary, and hardening the hearts of the wicked, I question if a more successful mean could be attempted for accomplishing this tragical scene, than by fomenting discord and division among the inhabitants of this mystical Jerusalem—Deists walk to church in the lane of our distractions; and are no less Deists still, than the devil was a devil, when *he stood among the sons of God*. Alas! our controversies fight at both ends, when truth lys bleeding in the midst; and while striving about shadows, the substance every day flies away imperceptibly even from those, among whom the brightest lamps of a flaming profession do shine. Oh dear Christians, quit not with the precious legacy (PEACE) which our Lord hath left us. The gospel proclaims peace to every soul in Christ, and what a dreadful account will these men have to make, who stirr up and encrease party strife among Christ's lambs? O that God would open the eyes of a professing age, and at last convince them, how much hurt perpetual broils and contentions are daily doing to the exercise of godliness! ONCE MORE, let every one be exhorted to examine himself, and see what hand he may particularly have, in breeding such furious heats as now abound among the godly; and beware of charging the crimes of some individuals upon whole societys; for I am perswaded, that (however epidemick such a practice may be) did you apply this to yourselves, you'd think it very unfair reasoning, to load any individual with the sins of each member in
this

this congregation: and whatever superior pretensions to strictness some may lay claim to, without an unfeigned love to Christ, and all his members, these will only turn out like a blazing *meteor*, or the splendid lamps of such whose address to others was, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*. If Peter is commanded to put up his sword, when Christ was at hand to heal the greatest wound he could have made on an enemy, why should men be so fond to lash and smite friends of this spiritual building, when there appear no such means of cure? Yet alas, with restless and factious spirits, courage undertakes, wit contrives, assistance furthers, conscience prepares, scrupulosity consents, strength prevails, and true religion still suffers: but while the church's enemies are thus employed, let us send our cries to heaven, humbly pleading that the Lord may cement all the citizens of Jerusalem, in the bond of peace and truth. We have no time to dally in idle jars and childish contentions, when a subject of the last importance requires our attention.

IN FINE, let us not dispute away our precious moments about any insignificant theme, when Christ and him crucified ought ever to be our main——our only inquiry. And while you, in your respective stations, are thus exercised, I would intreat the aid of your prayers in mine own behalf, and in the behalf of every labourer in our Lord's vineyard, that we may be happily directed to set the evangelick trumpet to our mouths, not to blow the flame of division, by which the body of Christ is rent, and tore asunder; not to draw persons to parties and factions; but that we may walk continually around the walls of Jerusalem, and warn the guilty wretch to escape the wrath to come, by getting under the covert of a Mediator's blood. And while thus studious of the church's prosperity, let us remember

ber our little sister, and emit our crys to a throne of mercy in behalf of the darkened nations, *that the earth may be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* Thus, if strife subsists, let us only strive who shall most closely follow after the Captain of our salvation, and most assiduously pursue the prosperity of his Jerusalem; and to him with the Father and holy Spirit be ascribed, as is most due, all praise, power, might, majesty and dominion, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CONCLUSION.

AS there remains a few vacant pages in this sheet, it will not readily offend the *reader*, if I fill them up with something relative to the preceeding *sermon*—'Tis one of the epidemic evils of our day, that the professors of our holy religion are so prone to misrepresent the principles of one another, upon the least apprehended difference, in point of sentiment, arising between them. After delivering the above sermon, some gentlemen, who seem disposed to speak charitably *only* of their own sect, appeared industrious to spread a report, that the above sermon inculcated and recommended a charity too extensive for them to admit of.

It may not therefore be amiss to acquaint the reader, that, after the publication of the sermon, I published a vindication thereof, intituled, *Charity always consistent with Christianity*, etc. to which I also subjoined a summary of the principles I avouched, both at receiving *Licence*, and afterwards at my *Ordination*; as contained in the scriptures of the old and New Testaments, and excellently summed up in the subordinate standards of the church of *Scotland*, ap-

proven by her general assemblies, and ratified by acts of parliament, particularly betwixt the years 1638 and 1650. And as some readers may not have seen my pamphlet just now referred to, for vindication of the above sermon, I subjoin the following excerpts (in relation to church communion) therefrom P. 17th.

Every Christian is under an indispensable obligation to maintain communion with these churches he has access unto, if they have not trampled upon the means of Reformation, nor are constitute upon the ruin of some essentials of Christianity. We are commanded publickly to attend ordinances, publickly to profess ourselves Christians, &c. And if the enquiry here should be, whether, at a time when churches are divided, a man may not rather suspend communion from them all, than, by communicating with any, encourage schismatical courses, to a breaking the church's peace, and supporting a spirit of division? I ANSWER, 1st, We must either suppose all the churches divided to remain true churches, but that some of them are more pure than others; in which case, by a general obligation, every man is bound to adhere to that church, which retains most of the evangelick purity. Or 2^{dly}, If they are all alike impure (which rarely is the case) He hath either communicate with one of them, or is yet to chuse, which he ought to give in an accession unto. If already joined, and sees none other, but as impure as that society he is immediately connected with; he ought to declare against her impurity, but yet to continue in communion. If he is yet to chuse, and remains undetermined, and unconnected as to any society; he may suspend himself from communion, until he is satisfied which church comes nighest to the divine pattern, and no longer.

Every man ought to continue in communion,
with

with that church of which he has been a member, until his communion becomes sin ; which must needs be, when the church either destroys her own attainments in Reformation, imposes anti-scriptural terms of communion upon her members, or adopts new articles repugnant to the Christian faith. But, supposing a church to remain upon her primitive scriptural constitution, and yet some corruptions creep in among particular members, which, through a neglect of discipline, &c. may be only tolerate, but not imposed ; I much question, if a complaint of this nature can warrant immediate separation.— See my sentiments more fully expressed in the pamphlet, intituled *Charity always consistent with Christianity*.

I conclude with a quotation from the judicious Dr. *Watts*, which seems not foreign to what has been hinted above.

Says that learned and eminent Author, Our Lord “ has not given leave to his ministers, whether separate in their single congregations, or united in synods or councils, the least degree of power to appoint one new article of faith, nor to injoin any new sort of devotion or practice, nor to impose any one rite or ceremony of worship, but what he himself has framed and enjoined. And yet, to our universal reproach, there is scarce any party of Christians but have been too ready to impose some doctrines upon the belief of their proselytes, which *Christ* has not imposed, or to require of them some practices or some abstinencies, about meat or days, or things indifferent, which *Christ* has not required. 'Tis this assuming power that has turned Christianity into an hundred shapes, and every one of them in some degree unlike the glorious gospel. 'Tis this has brought in all the superstitions and fooleries, the splendid vanities, the useless austerities and the childish

childish trifles of the *Greek* and *Roman* churches; and 'tis this has too far corrupted the purity and defaced the beauty of most of these churches who boast of reformation, and wear the Protestant name.

If there be any persons in the nation who are called to greater degrees of love and forbearance than others, and who should stand further off from imposing on the conscience of their neighbour and from judging their brother, we are the persons; we whom the laws of God and the laws of this land have permitted to judge for our selves.—If there be any ministers or people in the whole kingdom who should shine in charity to men, in love and condescension to their brethren, and in receiving those whom *Christ* has received without laying bars of *doubtful disputation* upon them; we should be those ministers and those people, we who pretend to stand up to vindicate our freedom from every yoke of bondage, and to support the liberty of men and Christians.”

Thus far Dr. Watts, in his *Humble attempt towards the revival of practical religion among Christians*.—The reader, if he pleases, may also consult his book, intituled, *The Rational foundation of a Christian Church, and the terms of Christian Communion*.—May the Lord himself bless the means of edification, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

F I N I S.

